

A scenic view of a coastal town and harbor from a hillside. In the foreground, two people are walking on a dirt path through lush greenery. The person in the foreground is wearing a white and black t-shirt and dark shorts. The person further ahead is wearing a black t-shirt and shorts. The background shows a large body of water, a town built on a hillside, and a distant city skyline across the water. The sky is clear and blue.

4 General objectives and policies

The general objectives and policies need to be read with an understanding, first, of the **vision** and the guiding **principles**, which provide the overarching basis for decision-making, in particular, how to balance competing values. The general objectives and policies are structured around the following themes:

Land administration



Nature



Landscape and land use



Culture and heritage



Recreation and access



Community and identity



Resilience

Where necessary, these are developed in more detail under the seven management sectors in Part 5.

Some actions have also been identified. These are identified as: N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing. Indicative timeframes given. Note: (i) Some 'new' projects come within larger funded programmes but have not yet been started. (ii) Implementation depends on budget allocations (see 1.1.6, Implementation, Funding and Reporting).

4.1 Land administration

4.1.1 Objectives

1. To administer and manage the Outer Green Belt reserves in a manner that reflects their classified reserve purpose or proposed purpose and protects site values relevant to the Outer Green Belt vision
2. To complete the Outer Green Belt as a connected series of reserves necessary to achieve the vision and guiding principles
3. To enhance existing values through land management partnership with adjacent land owners or acquisition of land, as appropriate.

4.1.2 Policies

4.1.2.1 Reserves classifications, land acquisitions and management mechanisms

1. Identify all Council-owned land intended to be part of the Outer Green Belt that is not a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 but should be, or where the current reserve classification is inappropriate and, in accordance with that Act and the objectives of this plan, undertake the necessary reserve declarations, naming and classification or reclassification
2. Classify all Outer Green Belt reserves as scenic reserve unless there is particular reason to use an alternative classification
3. Acquire land along the Outer Green Belt ridges where the Council is satisfied that ownership is the best option for protecting important site values after weighing up the relative merits of alternative mechanisms available
4. Provide funding to enable the Council to purchase strategically located land to add to the Outer Green Belt as opportunities arise, in particular, in areas where there are gaps in the Outer Green Belt reserves and near areas of future urban growth
5. Seek opportunities to increase operational funding as the city grows and visitor numbers increase, to provide the services people need and to manage the reserves appropriately
6. Use leases, licences and easements where necessary to facilitate appropriate use and good management of reserve land
7. Ensure that all land within the Outer Green Belt is appropriately zoned in the Wellington City District Plan to ensure the vision, objectives and policies of this plan are recognised in statutory documents and are considered in consenting under the Resource Management Act
8. Manage the removal of encroachments into Outer Green Belt reserves through the process outlined under the Rules section of this plan, see section 6.5.2, encroachments.

Explanation

Reserve classification. Declaring land to be a reserve brings it under the provisions of the Reserves Act which, in general, provides for ‘the preservation and management’ of land with certain values ‘for the benefit and enjoyment of the public’. Scenic reserve classification is generally most appropriate for the Outer Green Belt, given that land management is to focus first on protecting landscapes and ecosystems and then providing tracks and other facilities to enhance public enjoyment of the natural environment. The Reserves Act provides for two types of scenic reserve, (a) where an area’s existing values warrant protection and preservation, and (b) where an area’s values will become, with development and the introduction of flora, of such value as to warrant development, protection and preservation. Where circumstances warrant, other reserve classifications will be considered and some land will not be classified at all. Existing and proposed classifications and district plan zonings are described in the land title schedules for each management sector in Part 5.

Land acquisition/disposal. Land acquisition represents both an immediate capital cost to the Council as

well as ongoing operational and management costs. The costs and benefits of land acquisition need to be carefully weighed up against the potential to achieve adequate protection and management via other mechanisms such as easements, rights of way and protective covenants. In some places, for instance, opportunities to negotiate access across private or Crown or Crown Agency land is a way to extend or better connect the recreational network without the Council having to buy land, especially in situations where the landowner has public responsibilities. On the other hand, acquisition may be the only, or best way, of achieving objectives and can often be funded or part-funded through non-rates mechanisms, such as development contributions or reserve agreements. Acquisition often allows for easier management and development over time of multiple values (e.g. recreation, landscape, nature) and also secures lasting protection over land, an asset that does not depreciate.

Leases and licenses. The requirements for issuing leases and licenses will be guided by the provisions in the Reserves Act and, in the case of leases, the Council’s *Leases Policy for Community and Recreation Groups* where appropriate. The process is set out in Part 6, Rules, in this plan.

4.1.2.2 Urban containment and continuity

1. Manage the Outer Green Belt as a corridor of protected (Council and Crown land) open space that forms a natural edge to urban development and is wide enough to clearly separate ‘town’ from ‘country’ and offer multiple open space values.

Explanation

Wellington’s urban growth plan¹⁶ recognises the distinctive and desirable role of the Outer Green Belt in keeping the city compact by defining the inland edge of Wellington’s built environment. The district plan also recognises the Outer Green Belt’s value in

providing an open, undeveloped edge to the city. The district plan zoning and other provisions support the progressive creation of a ‘demarcation line for the city’¹⁷. The district plan provisions include, in particular, the ridgelines and hilltops overlay, designed to manage inappropriate development within the overlay area. However, the provisions do not prohibit development as such, and the Outer Green Belt extends beyond the overlay. Therefore, other methods of formalising the demarcation line are also required. Methods include reserve status and land management to protect open space character.

¹⁶ *Wellington Towards 2014: Smart Capital and the Wellington Urban Growth Plan 2014-2043*

¹⁷ Policy 16.5.1.5 (which refers to ‘Outer Town Belt’)

The Outer Green Belt needs to be wider than a narrow ridgetop strip. It should form a physical and visual barrier that will separate the urban and rural sectors of the city area and enable people visiting it to feel they are ‘getting away’. Its highly-valued skylines need to be seen in the context of the hill slope landforms below and it needs to span a range of environments and habitats to be an effective ecological corridor.

The Council’s open spaces and recreation framework, *Our Capital Spaces (2013-2023)*, prioritises expanding and protecting gaps in the Outer Green Belt to strengthen its recreational and landscape continuity. This priority recognises the Outer Green Belt’s importance in the city’s overall open space and

reserves network, its part in Wellington’s identity and liveability, and its potential to be an enduring and formative element as the city grows and changes.

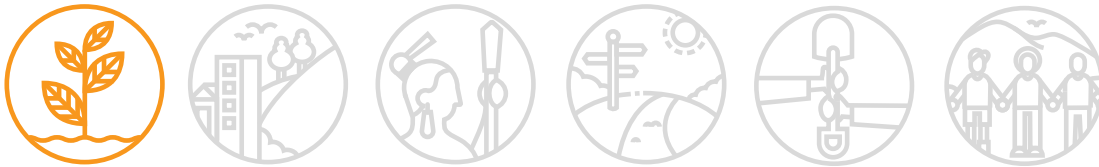
Ample breadth is needed for people to feel remote from the city when in the Outer Green Belt and for the Outer Green Belt to function as an ecological corridor and undeveloped landscape backdrop to the city. This is a unique and valued characteristic of the Outer Green Belt.

4.1.2.3 Relationship with the district plan

1. When considering resource consent applications under the district plan for land use in the Outer Green Belt reserves, use this plan as a Council strategic document and as a general policy and information source, in particular, for understanding existing site values when considering assessments of effects.
2. When future district plan changes and amendments are being considered, seek opportunities to strengthen the Outer Green Belt vision by aligning protection and enhancement of key open space values to nearby private land, for example, protecting significant vegetation on private land.

Explanation

Certain land use activities within the Outer Green Belt are subject to the provisions of the Wellington City District Plan, which is a statutory document under the Resource Management Act. The Upper Stebbings Valley Structure Plan growth planning is likely to result in new reserves affecting the Outer Green Belt and in district plan changes (see Part 5 management sectors 1 and 2.) See Appendix II, Policy and Planning Context for more on other plans.



4.2 Nature

Being close to nature is a point of difference for Wellingtonians. The focus in this section is nature for nature's sake, its intrinsic value, protection and enhancement, and the opportunity for connectivity due to the long shape and large scale of the Outer Green Belt. Other sections cover what this means for user experience, landscape values, and wellbeing.

4.2.1 Objectives

1. To sustainably manage the Outer Green Belt land with particular regard to protecting and enhancing its mauri and exercising the principles of kaitiakitanga
2. To restore and protect a continuous ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt that connects areas of high natural value, taking into account opportunities to enhance ecological connections beyond the Outer Green Belt and the need to retain open grassland in specified areas for recreation and landscape reasons
3. To recognise the importance of the Outer Green Belt in underpinning the city's biodiversity values due to the Outer Green Belt's location, size and shape and the available habitat.

4.2.2 Policies & Actions

4.2.2.1 Caring for nature

1. Prioritise protection of all important forest remnants and other areas of high ecological value in the Outer Green Belt reserves through appropriate reserve classification and district plan provisions, fencing, weed and pest animal control, and controls on activities (see Rules)
2. Protect key areas of high ecological value or indigenous species through ongoing and concerted pest animal and pest plant control
3. Where an action plan exists to protect and manage nationally, regionally or locally significant indigenous species present in the Outer Green Belt, manage the species in accordance with that plan
4. Support and foster biodiversity research in the Outer Green Belt to inform biodiversity protection, ecological restoration and management efforts
5. Ensure local mana whenua have the opportunity to be involved in nature conservation initiatives
6. Encourage protection of all important forest remnants and other areas of high ecological value on private land neighbouring the Outer Green Belt by working together with landowners and supporting good management
7. Encourage and support individuals and households to take action in support of biodiversity and to report sightings of threatened or locally important native species in the Outer Green Belt or neighbouring properties
8. Develop biodiversity interpretation to help tell the stories of natural taonga on the Outer Green Belt through the proposed Outer Green Belt interpretation plan (see policy 4.6.2.5).

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| a) Identify areas of traditional Māori use and biodiversity value, and work with iwi to conduct an assessment of biodiversity sites of cultural significance. | N | 1-2 yrs |
|---|---|---------|

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt contains much of Wellington's most important ecological areas and hosts many of the nationally and regionally threatened species and locally significant species listed in appendix 5 of *Our Natural Capital*. Protection and ecological restoration needs to be planned strategically over such a large area to get the most benefit from the outlay of effort and resources. The Council prioritises its biodiversity resources city-wide, informed by restoration objectives, monitoring results, weed and pest animal management issues and community wishes. As set out in *Our Natural Capital*, the first priority is to protect the best of what we've already got, including buffer areas around them, so that those high-value areas flourish and can gradually expand. Managing the intervening areas will focus on optimising the conditions for natural regeneration of native vegetation to continue and, where needed, restoring 'stepping stone' habitat to enable key or re-introduced species to move along the corridor and colonise new areas.

It is also important to consider the Outer Green Belt's role in the wider network of natural areas and ecosystem restoration in the city and beyond. It is, for instance, the main corridor for birds such as kākā, kākāriki and korimako (bellbird) travelling out from Zealandia to areas where new populations could establish. The Predator Free Wellington programme is a key initiative in making habitats safe for wildlife to spread into. Capital Kiwi is another initiative, aimed at reintroducing kiwi to the Wellington peninsula, under which an extensive predator control programme is under way in partnership with private landowners in the rural lands west of the Outer Green Belt. Restoration at key nodes could enhance the potential spread of native plant and wildlife species beyond the Outer Green Belt into adjoining areas (such as stream catchments or the Rangituhi/Colonial Knob reserves) or via open space links to the Wellington Town Belt or Belmont Regional Park. Coastal connections are now an important element also, as the Outer Green Belt has been extended in this plan, from the top of the coastal escarpment down to sea level on the south coast.

4.2.2.2 Streams

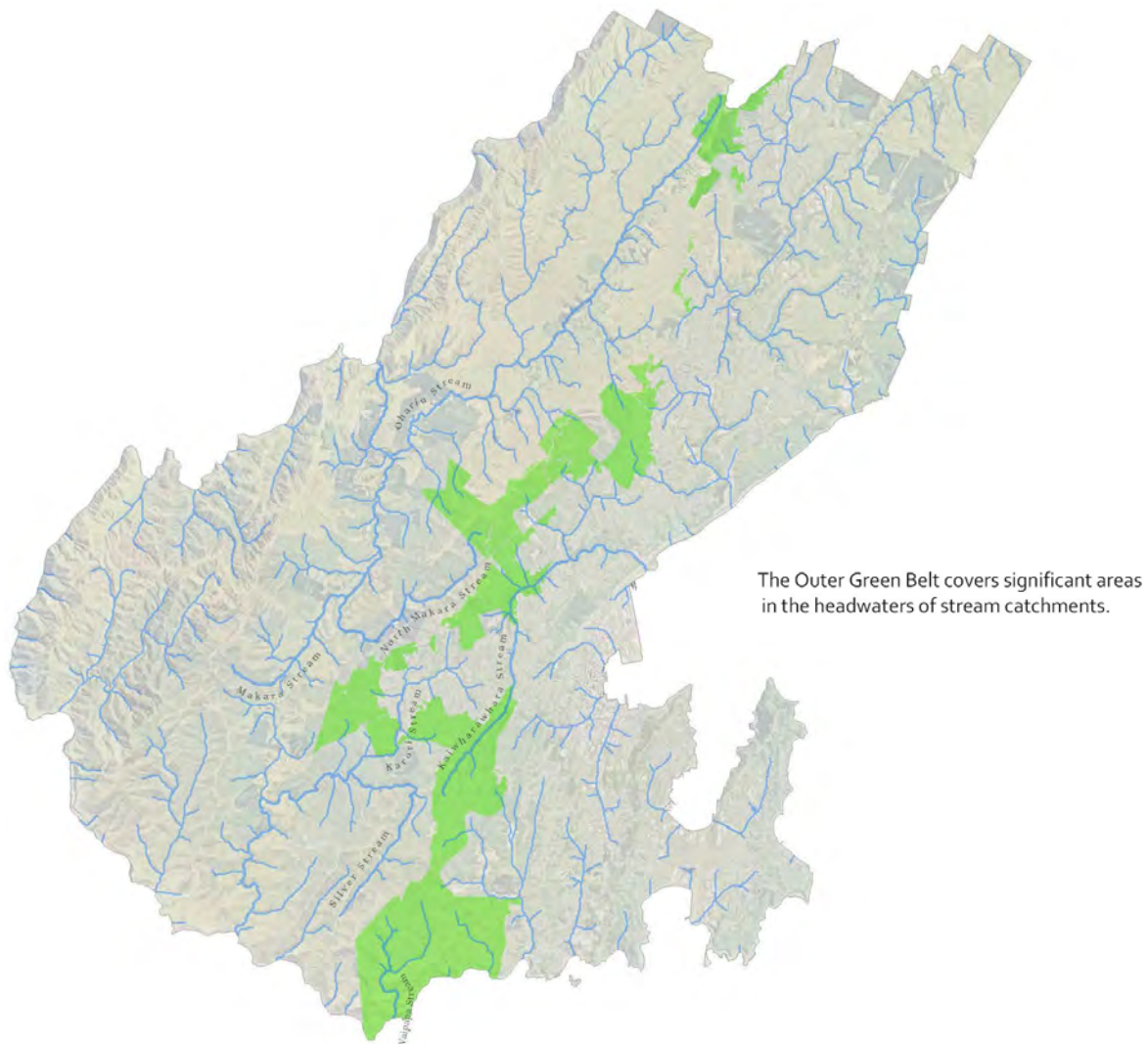
1. Protect and restore the freshwater ecology in the stream catchments of the Outer Green Belt, including seeps and wetlands, by fencing riparian land where necessary to exclude stock, riparian planting, avoiding inappropriate discharges including via the storm water system, removing any fish barriers, and removing rubbish periodically where necessary
2. Encourage native forest to regenerate in the steep stream headwater areas of the Outer Green Belt to improve water quality by holding and filtering runoff, and reducing soil erosion
3. Where possible maintain at least a 20 metre (minimum 5 metre) vegetation buffer on each side of streams to protect water and soil values and slow runoff
4. Ensure, in granting consent or permitting land use activities, that best practice freshwater management is applied when site works are required that might impact streams, for example plantation harvest, land disturbance, construction
5. Ensure best practice for use of toxins in or near water catchments, to ensure toxin or poisoned animal carcasses do not enter waterways, by strictly observing DoC-recommended buffer zones for the use of toxins
6. Continue to work with GWRC to monitor the streams in Wellington City using the Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) and trends in any key freshwater fish populations
7. Support community initiatives to care for and monitor streams through partnerships and programmes such as 'Sanctuary to Sea' and 'Whitebait Connection', and public campaigns to reduce inappropriate storm water or land use discharges
8. Encourage neighbouring farmers to fence and plant riparian areas on their land and, where resources permit, offer practical support.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt contains the headwaters of tributary streams flowing into all the city's main streams, including Porirua, Ohariu, Mākara, Ngauranga, Kaiwharawhara, Karori, Silver and Ōwhiro streams as well as short stream catchments draining onto the south coast, such as the Waipapa and Hape

streams. The Outer Green Belt is significant for catchment management, a key concept in larger action plans for freshwater in *Our Natural Capital*. Restoring vegetation cover to the headwater land will improve water quality and habitat for freshwater species.

Wellington's Main Streams



The Council is a stakeholder in the Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Wellington Harbour and Hutt Valley Whaitua, a community-led collaborative planning process to carry out GWRC's obligations under the *National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management*. The Whaitua are required to set freshwater objectives

and water quality and quantity limits in catchments by 2025 in order to maintain or improve water quality. The Whaitua implementation plans are likely to inform freshwater management in the Outer Green Belt over the life of this plan.

4.2.2.3 Indigenous flora and planting

1. Protect threatened or locally significant plant species through weed and pest animal control and enhance distribution through planting
2. Continue restoration planting programmes to enhance and connect important forest remnants in the Outer Green Belt, taking into account the potential for natural regeneration to occur and the need to ensure a mix of plant types, including emergent trees, climbers and ground covers
3. Consider reintroducing threatened and under-represented plant species within the restoration planting programme, where appropriate and feasible
4. Use only eco-sourced plants when planting indigenous plants on the Outer Green Belt and continue to promote the practice to the wider community, including neighbours
5. Prioritise planting within the Outer Green Belt to enhance stream environments with riparian planting and to provide good habitat for wildlife

6. Progressively carry out enhancement planting of emergent indigenous tree species, such as podocarps, throughout existing forest areas.

Explanation

While native vegetation is regenerating over large areas of the Outer Green Belt, much is lacking in species diversity, and some plant species are either under-represented or have disappeared locally due to removal, competition and/or loss of habitat.

The Council implements an ongoing city-wide restoration planting strategy¹⁸ to ensure that planting covers a representative range of sites across different ecosystems around the city. The strategy is geared to boost diversity and development of the different plant communities by including a mix of colonising species, emergent trees, climbers and groundcover species, as well as introducing rare and under-represented plants. In many cases planting projects are closely associated with managing weeds and pest animals. Revegetating areas with native species can also help to suppress the regrowth or establishment of some weeds.

4.2.2.4 Wildlife

1. Support the proliferation and spread of indigenous wildlife within the Outer Green Belt ecological corridor through weed control, pest animal control and planting, to enhance safe and sustaining habitat for native wildlife
2. Lead or support efforts to restore indigenous wildlife to the Outer Green Belt, such as through Zealandia's restoration programme
3. Work with relevant organisations, such as Zealandia and Capital Kiwi, to investigate the restoration of indigenous fauna through reintroduction

4. Continue to enhance our knowledge of birds, lizards, freshwater fish, invertebrates and, potentially, bats in the Outer Green Belt through surveys and monitoring programmes
5. Continue to use opportunities for veteranisation (preserving old trees using arborist techniques to enhance/create wildlife habitat) of old exotic trees such as pines, as has been done at Zealandia.

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

a) Based on recent lizard surveys, develop a lizard monitoring plan	ongoing	1-2 yrs
b) Investigate how to educate people about appropriate ways to behave around vulnerable wildlife.	E	3-5 yrs

¹⁸ Objective 2.1.1 (a), Our Natural Capital (2015), p.44

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt is the largest wildlife corridor in the capital and holds several threatened and locally significant species, such as kākā, tieke (saddleback), barking gecko and long fin eels. *Our Natural Capital* outlines the idea of ‘Wildlife Safe Wellington’, whereby the city Overall becomes a safe haven for indigenous wildlife and, specifically, Council reserves become wildlife-friendly refuges. The likelihood that people will encounter wildlife will increase, so it will be important to educate people about how to behave to avoid endangering vulnerable wildlife, such as keeping dogs leashed, not feeding birds, and managing cats.

Within the Outer Green Belt, Zealandia is a pivotal area - its wildlife reintroductions and community programme of extending out a halo of safe bird habitat is a key initiative. Restoration of the ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt, including implementing the Predator Free Wellington programme, will extend the halo even further. In future, the Outer Green Belt will be the threshold area close to the city where kiwi will spread from the rural hinterland under the Capital Kiwi project.



Barking gecko

The Barking Gecko (previously called Wellington Green Gecko) is one of the few species endemic to the Wellington Region (occurs nowhere else).

It is at risk, with a declining population status. Very little is known about its specific habitat choice and there is limited ability to monitor its population—due to its cryptic nature and habits it is particularly hard to survey.

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4.2.2.5 Weeds, pest animals and diseases

1. Manage weeds, pest animals and feral animals in accordance with *Our Natural Capital*
2. Work closely with GWRC to implement both statutory and strategic weed and pest animal management requirements on the Outer Green Belt
3. Undertake surveillance of the Outer Green Belt reserves to detect instances of myrtle rust and work with the Ministry for Primary Industries and DoC to exchange information and seek advice on protecting vulnerable plant species
4. Manage and monitor ecologically damaging weed species to (i) protect, as a priority, areas of high natural value from invasion and (ii) contain spread into other areas of natural value
5. Ensure timely management of weed wilding trees to protect native forest restoration efforts
6. When threatened or locally significant species or populations are identified and are particularly vulnerable, carry out reactive and targeted ‘knock-down’ control to protect the vulnerable species (e.g. protect tūturiwhatu (dotterel), tieke or kākā nesting sites from predators)
7. Help keep grassland areas open, where required, by managing weeds, particularly to contain the spread of Darwin’s barberry and gorse
8. Support research and trials into biocontrol agents of weed and pest animal species that are hard to control on the Outer Green Belt

- 9. Work with the National Biocontrol Collective¹⁹ to ensure the continuation of the Darwin’s barberry biocontrol programme and advocate for releases of the control agents in key sites
- 10. Encourage and support community participation in weed and pest animal control

- 11. Work in collaboration with Predator Free Wellington, Capital Kiwi and other community groups to ensure benefits to the Outer Green Belt from pest animal control.

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

a) Review weed management programmes on the Outer Green Belt and identify gaps in protection of habitat types or species from weeds	E	1-2 yrs
b) Undertake research to investigate whether or not native vegetation can regenerate through Darwin’s barberry and, if so, determine the critical factors.	E	1-5 yrs

Explanation

Ecological corridors can be a conduit for introduced pests. Pest species can threaten ecosystems and restoration efforts through competition, damage and predation. The Council recognises and manages this risk in its city-wide biosecurity management, guided by Our Natural Capital 2015 and its statutory control obligations under the Greater Wellington Regional Pest Management Plan 2019-2039. A list of weeds and pest animals is contained in appendix 6 of Our Natural Capital.

Since 2005, weed and pest animal control in the Outer Green Belt has been prioritised in areas of high ecological value. However, available resources limit the extent of weed control that can be carried out.

Weeds²⁰. There are many weed species threatening the ecological values of the Outer Green Belt. Weed control needs to be prioritised, first, according to the biodiversity value of sites and, then, to target the weed species that pose the highest threat to the ecological values of prioritised sites. For example, in an important forest habitat controlling climbers such as old man’s beard, banana passionfruit and Japanese honeysuckle is prioritised because climbing weeds can smother and destroy the forest structure, and then woody weeds such as holly are tackled. In more open forest areas, groundcovers like English ivy and tradescantia would be prioritised because they prevent

native seedlings from establishing. Another priority is where weeds currently have limited distribution. Weed control is also prioritised according to the level of threat to the particular habitat being managed and the feasibility of control with available methods. For instance, Darwin’s barberry has a comparatively limited distribution in the southern Te Kopahou area so its control there is prioritised to prevent it taking hold in an area of valuable nature. In other areas, such as the ridgetops of Wrights Hill and Te Wharangi ridge, it is so widespread that control is not feasible at this time. Spraying will be used to limit further spread into areas that are to be kept in grassland (see 4.3.2.2, grazing). Biocontrol is a potential longer term solution to control weed species, such as Darwin’s barberry and tradescantia, that create large infestations at various sites. There are signs of native vegetation coming up through older areas of barberry, raising the question of whether it can eventually be overtopped and suppressed, like gorse. However, research is required to investigate this. In 2018, myrtle rust was detected in Wellington. The fungal plant disease affects plants in the myrtle family, including species native to the Outer Green Belt such as northern rata, ramarama and swamp maire. Little is yet known about how it might affect vulnerable native species but information gathering is the first step, through surveillance and reporting sightings to key agencies.

¹⁹ The collective brings together representatives from local and central government and the research sector to pool resources and decision-making on serious weed issues.
²⁰ Defined in Our Natural Capital as 'any unwanted plant organism that outcompetes, displaces and/or prevents natural succession of indigenous species.' This can include invasive native plants.



Megan Banks from GWRC releasing Darwin's barberry seed weevils into a mesh bag tied around the branch of a Darwin's barberry bush. Darwin's barberry seed weevil is being investigated as a long-term solution to large infestations on the Outer Green Belt. Photograph: RNZ/Alison Ballance

Pest animals found in the Outer Green Belt include possums, rabbits, hares, goats, deer, pigs, rats, cats, stoats, weasels, hedgehogs, mice, magpies and wasps. Goat and pig numbers have been suppressed, though there is invasion from properties adjacent to Te Kopahou and parts of the Te Wharangi ridge. Ongoing control of feral animals, such as goats, pigs and deer will be required. Since the 2004 version of this plan, long-running and city-wide control by the Council and GWRC has seen possum numbers greatly reduced, assisting in significant forest regeneration in the Outer Green Belt. In 2017, possum control was expanded to

the open tops of Te Kopahou. Much of the Outer Green Belt is under intense possum control compared to adjacent rural land, so reinvasion is a constant issue. Rural neighbours have the opportunity to opt into the GWRC possum control programme.

In the last few years, community-run volunteer pest animal control has burgeoned and the Council has been building systems to support and empower this community of trappers in their protection efforts. The volunteer work is targeted at small mammals such as rats, mustelids and hedgehogs.

The Council, GWRC and the NEXT Foundation have entered into a partnership to achieve the vision of a Predator Free Wellington, an aspiration of Wellington's community. The partners are working on initial project planning, research and co-design to free Wellington from predators, with a focus on possums, rats and mustelids. The primary aim will be to reduce and maintain these predators to zero - the best way to enable wildlife restoration while also improving the resilience of Wellington's urban ecology. The vision aligns with that of the national Predator Free NZ 2050 aspiration. Capital Kiwi is another initiative aligned closely with Predator Free Wellington. Its focus currently, is to reduce predator numbers in the rural areas west and southwest of the Outer Green Belt to a level where kiwi could safely be reintroduced and then maintain low predator numbers. The extensive Capital Kiwi trapping programme will help to reduce the constant reinvasion of predators into the Outer Green Belt from adjoining farmland.

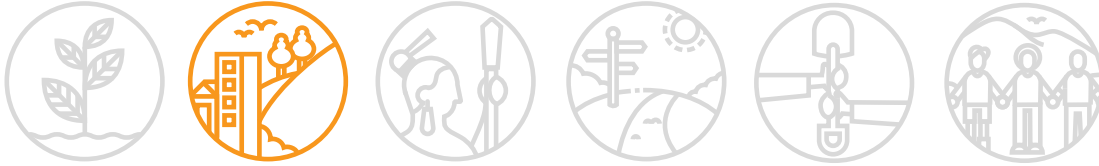
4.2.2.6 Ecological values on private land

1. Inform neighbouring landowners about areas and features (e.g. mature native trees) of ecological value on their land and encourage them through advice and, where possible, practical support to protect and restore those areas and features, especially where useful ecological connections would be enhanced or created
2. Encourage and support neighbours to undertake weed and pest animal control
3. Encourage neighbours to protect freshwater values on their land, including potentially retiring steep land in the headwaters of stream catchments and restoring or fencing riparian land bordering water courses
4. Work collaboratively with willing neighbours whose properties contain forest remnants to:
 - Establish vegetation that will buffer and connect those remnants
 - Allow seed collection from specimens in those remnants for the Council's seed collection programme to strengthen the genetic resilience of eco-sourced plant propagation.

Explanation

Connecting up the ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt will be greatly helped by the support and co-operation of neighbouring landowners. At the small scale, residential neighbours can help by controlling weeds and pest animals on their properties. At the larger scale, farmers often have a strong sense of stewardship for their land and recognise the importance of biodiversity and freshwater values within productive landscapes. However, they might not always have good information about the ecology on their land, how to look after natural areas nor

what assistance might be available to them. While it is the land owner's decision, the Council can facilitate and encourage conservation on neighbouring land through discussion, advice and information and, where possible, practical support and incentives. The Council regularly sprays weed growth along its rural fence lines to meet statutory requirements and to keep its fence assets clear for maintenance. The spread of weeds across boundaries is an issue best addressed by education and collaboration.



4.3 Landscape and land use

4.3.1 Objectives

1. To protect the Outer Green Belt landscape as an enduring part of Wellington’s identity
2. To recognise and protect the Outer Green Belt landscape as a setting for a unique and varied recreation experience in the hills at the edge of the city and Cook Strait
3. To restrict development of buildings and structures in order to protect the relatively undeveloped character of the Outer Green Belt, which people value for its intrinsic natural and visual values
4. To achieve a sustainable balance between maintaining open hilltop landscapes and restoring taller-growing indigenous vegetation on the Outer Green Belt.

4.3.2 Policies & Actions

4.3.2.1 Landscape character

1. Recognise and protect the rugged, relatively undeveloped character of the Outer Green Belt landscape and its role as a natural visual backdrop in the city
2. Maintain an open landscape character on defined summit and ridgetop areas of the Outer Green Belt to facilitate variety in recreational experiences, including places of wide open space and optimal views out
3. Maintain clear views from identified viewpoints on hilltops, ridgelines, side spurs and tracks by controlling vegetation height or, subject to 4.3.2.4, by providing viewing platforms
4. Recognise the different landscape character in the management sectors, taking into account the different combinations of land form, ecology, land use and local history, as the basis for ensuring diversity of places and recreational opportunities within the Outer Green Belt.

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

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| a) Identify key viewpoints and ‘open tops’ areas and consider how areas will be maintained clear of tall vegetation over time and demarcated on the ground. | N | ongoing ²¹ |
|---|---|-----------------------|

Explanation

As described in section 3.3, the Outer Green Belt is an important part of Wellington’s landscape, particularly valued for its relatively undeveloped skylines and increasingly bush-clad land forms. The interweaving of bush-clad slopes and grazed open tops has historically characterised the Outer Green Belt but

this pattern is changing as more of the steep higher slopes revert from pasture to woody vegetation. From a land management perspective, revegetating the steep land and stream headwaters on the flanks of the ridges helps to maintain healthy streams by holding and filtering run-off. Visually, the forested eastern

²¹ The intention is to only identify key areas, with some secondary viewpoints on tracks that might grow over in time. This work will happen when reviewing grazing management and fencing programmes and when new land is added to the Outer Green Belt.

flanks are valued as a natural backdrop to the city. Recreationally, the contrast between exposed open tops and more sheltered forested areas offers variety in the environments people can experience. How to maintain open land on upper slope and ridgetop areas is discussed further under grazing (see 4.3.2.2.).

The continuity of ridgeline land forms is a feature of the Outer Green Belt landscape but diversity at the local scale also needs to be recognised, not only to reflect differences in site conditions but also the different history and desires of adjacent communities. Managing that diversity is picked up in the management sector policies in Part 5.

4.3.2.2 Grazing

1. Trial the gradual phasing out of grazing from Outer Green Belt reserves in stages, in consultation with the current graziers to manage the process, including:
 - a) Issuing interim grazing licenses where appropriate for periods of up to five years
 - b) Adapting grazing regimes, where possible, to reduce duration of cattle grazing and/or replace with sheep grazing
 - c) Upgrading boundary fences to fully exclude farm stock from the reserves
- d) Negotiating exit plans with graziers, subject to the outcomes of the alternative management trials.
2. Trial mechanical methods and herbicide spraying to maintain retired ridgetop areas that are to be kept in open grassland and adapt the management regime as considered necessary from monitoring results (see action (d) below).
3. Ensure the fire risk on the open ridgetops is specifically addressed in the proposed fire plan (4.7.2.2).

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

a) Identify and map the areas to be kept in grassland to maintain views and open ridgetops for recreation, and prepare a fencing maintenance/upgrade plan to help secure funding and guide the staged cessation of grazing	N	1-2 yrs
b) Formalise interim grazing rights with grazing licenses of no more than five-year terms	N	1-2 yrs
c) Implement the fencing/upgrade plan	N	1-2 yrs
d) Set up monitoring of the changes in the grassland areas as a research project to inform decisions about how best to maintain the desired areas of open ridgetop. Gather baseline data before retiring grazing areas or adapting continuing the management regimes.	N	1-2 yrs

Explanation

Until now grazing has been used to maintain pasture cover on the ridgetops and hilltops north of Mākara Road saddle. To the south, there is no grazing on Outer Green Belt reserves. The Council has reviewed the effectiveness, suitability and sustainability of grazing regimes in the light of recreational use, environmental impact and farm consultant advice about the land's grazing capacity and value. Though some people appreciate seeing farm animals close to the city for the rural character and historic associations, it is proposed to gradually phase out grazing. Contributing factors include compatibility issues between recreational

users and grazing stock, costly trampling damage to tracks, vegetation and the pasture itself, especially in wet winter conditions, pugging in riparian areas affecting water quality, browse on native vegetation, the marginal productive value of the land and the cost of fencing. A fencing audit has highlighted the need for maintenance, replacement or construction of boundary fences as well as the need to repair or fill gaps in fencing inside the reserves to exclude grazing stock from forest restoration areas and/or permanent forest sinks. Fencing along the grazed margins of the Western Wellington Forests Key Natural Ecosystem

(KNE), which covers a large part of Te Wharangi ridge, is prioritised in the KNE management plan.

Grazing is not necessarily the only or most cost-effective way to maintain the desired areas of grassland, given that the land is marginal farmland at best. Instead, it is proposed to trial the use of a combination of mechanical means and targeted weed spraying.

The outcome envisaged is that the tops will remain open grassland for a long time without grazing though the nature of the grassland will change. It will become 'rank grass' (long grass), which will form a thick thatch and is likely to persist for decades or longer due to the harsh conditions in most places - extreme wind exposure and drought, exacerbated by the poor thin soils and likely increased extremes of climate change. It is envisaged that recreational outcomes will be improved by removing the stock and also allowing an alternative kind of lush grassland to develop. Ecological objectives will be supported as there will be less risk of stock damage to forest and riparian areas and the grassland is likely to provide good lizard habitat. It is also thought likely that the thick rank grass thatch will suppress quite a lot of weed growth compared to shorter pasture, as weed seeds are less likely to develop on ground shaded by the thatch.

The principal weed species that are likely to invade open areas are gorse and Darwin's barberry. Grazing stock has not been effective in preventing or slowing the spread of Darwin's barberry but the Council has had some success in controlling it with its routine boundary fence aerial spraying. The Council proposes to spray the edges of the grassland areas to keep the infestations from spreading and will continue supporting research into bio-control.

The change is to be staged gradually, in consultation with the graziers involved, to ensure boundary fencing is in good order before totally excluding stock. That will allow the Council to progressively trial and monitor the new regime, adapting its management approach as required, including reintroducing grazing if necessary. One factor that will need to be watched, for instance, is whether the taller grass will increase fire risk. In the meantime, where grazing continues for an interim period, sheep grazing will be sought instead of cattle, as sheep have less environmental impact and are less intimidating to recreational users, though the dog-on-leash rule will need to be strictly enforced. This change to grazing currently affects sectors 3 and 4 but could well affect land management decisions in newly acquired reserves in sectors 1 and 2 as well. The existing horse grazing lease in the Chartwell area (Management Sector 4) is to continue in the meantime but is likely to be phased out in the longer term.

4.3.2.3 Plantation forestry

1. Manage existing forestry plantations to be gradually replaced by regenerating native forest by:
 - Allowing the exotic trees to age and fall over naturally, unless selective removal is warranted to manage risk and/or potential weed problems, or
 - Harvest of selected blocks to maximise timber value to help fund native forest restoration and weed control of the sites, or
 - Staged removal of blocks following significant weather events

and

 - Controlling weed competition and wilding pine regrowth in cleared areas and forest gaps
2. Take into account in applying (1) above, the need to protect stream catchments from increased run-off, erosion and sedimentation
3. Manage the gradual transition from exotic to native forest to provide, over the duration, a variety of environments for recreational use, for example, areas of relatively open forest beneath mature pines, other areas of dense regeneration in forest gaps
4. Manage exotic shelter belts and trees that have recognised heritage value for longevity but do not replant, to avoid perpetuating seed production that could threaten nearby ecological or landscape values.

Explanation

The Council generally manages plantations on its reserve land for ecological and/or recreational benefits rather than commercial production. A low-key management approach is generally adopted whereby trees are allowed to age and fall over naturally. Over time, gaps are created and the overall forest canopy thins, letting in more light which encourages a native understorey to regenerate. The Council's tree team mainly deals with storm damage on a reactive basis but may also take action to manage risk when required. There is the possibility that forest areas may need to be closed to the public for significant periods of time following major storm damage. Given the changes that can occur with weather events as well as the natural ageing of the trees, the Council monitors trees and stands of trees, using internationally recognised methodology.

Some proactive management is also used selectively. For instance, the Council is experimenting with ways

to enhance native forest regeneration, while retaining tall tree habitat for wildlife, by removing or killing single trees or tree groups in the middle of forest stands without affecting the stability of the whole stand. In other situations, staged removal of tree stands might be required where stands have become unstable and/or where weed growth in the tangle of branches and timber that follows tree fall, is likely to be difficult and costly to manage. The Council's carbon storage obligations will be taken into account in managing conversion from exotic to native forest cover.

The main plantations (or remnants of plantations) in the Outer Green Belt are at Spicer Forest, Te Ngāhere-o-Tawa/Forest of Tawa, the Airstrip Block above Stebbings Valley, north of Johnston Hill, Karori Parkland at Zealandia. Any specific management policies for these are outlined under the relevant management sectors in Part 5.

4.3.2.4 Development and land use

1. Protect the relatively undeveloped natural and rural character of the Outer Green Belt by applying the Rules in this plan (Part 6) and promoting other statutory and non-statutory mechanisms to minimise built development and land use change that would undermine that character. Limit development of buildings in the Outer Green Belt
2. Avoid siting large structures and buildings on ridgetops and hilltops, unless an elevated location is essential for public utility and cannot practically be located elsewhere
3. Locate new buildings and structures around the edges of the Outer Green Belt wherever possible and appropriate, to preserve the character of the areas that are more remote from urban development and comparatively free of structures
4. Avoid significant earthworks in visually prominent areas while not precluding land management activities that will have only reasonable short-term effects, for example, grading the line of a new fence or managing tracks that will be re-grassed within a few months
5. Assess proposed buildings, structures or earthworks to ensure the development is necessary and in keeping with the landscape character, using the assessment criteria in the Rules section, which includes assessment under the district plan if a resource consent is required
6. Design and locate all built development, including tracks and signage, to minimise the visual and physical impact on landscape and heritage features, landscape character and ecology
7. If existing public utility structures and buildings become obsolete for their existing use and are not suitable for suitable adaptive re-use, they must be removed and the sites reinstated as public open space
8. Produce a landscape development plan to guide any major development such as main entrances or visitor facilities, ensuring to apply the assessment criteria in the Rules section of this plan and best practice design,²² such as water-sensitive design, to minimise adverse visual and environmental impacts

²² See *Water Sensitive Urban Design, A guide for WSfUD storm water management in Wellington*

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9. Assess requests for commemorative furniture under the Council's Commemorative Policy, taking particular care that any such furniture:
- Is appropriate to and does not clutter the surrounding environment
 - Is designed and placed to be unobtrusive in the setting
 - Does not detract from the remote character in some parts of the Outer Green Belt
10. Limit the installation of permanent artworks in most areas of the Outer Green Belt, as being generally inappropriate to the natural values except at main entrances but consider, in rare instances, and evaluate under the Council's *Public Art Policy 2012*, artwork that has been designed as part of a detailed site plan and would complement or interpret site values.

Explanation

The relative absence of structures, buildings and roads on the Outer Green Belt is important to its natural character, urban containment role and the recreational experience it offers. Nevertheless, a limited number of built features do exist and there will, inevitably, be demands for further development of one sort or another. Already increased public use has resulted in calls for more amenities such as toilets, seats and shelters, as well as improved signage and more track development. Collectively these kinds of features can create the impression of 'clutter' unless well planned and designed, yet in some situations built features such as pou, entrance markers and artworks could add to people's experience and sense of place without undermining the overall undeveloped character of the Outer Green Belt.

There may well be new demands in the future that we can't foresee now, just as the proposed zip line above Carey's Gully (currently being considered) would not have been foreseen 10 years ago. This management plan will help guide responses to any new demands and whether they should or should not be accommodated through consideration of detailed proposals under criteria in the Rules section, including public consultation if impacts are significant and/or the use so unusual that it requires wider input.

Built development that is required for visitor amenities will be generally located at the edge of the Outer Green Belt, particularly at main entrances where existing built infrastructure already exists (e.g. roads and water supply). Entrances and any other built development will need to be low-key, well designed and planned

to reflect the emphasis on the Outer Green Belt's natural values. Places where such development is planned are specified in the management sectors (Part 5). In the case of utilities, it is accepted that some do require elevated sites but further development will be discouraged from places of particular landscape importance or in currently undeveloped areas. A point to note is that sometimes built structures become iconic landmarks, as in the case of the Mt Kaukau television mast and the Brooklyn wind turbine. As technology changes, some existing infrastructure, such as transmitter towers, may become obsolete but other needs are likely to arise, such as new water reservoir sites to serve urban growth areas or to provide emergency water supplies.

In addition to this management plan, the Council will use the following mechanisms to manage proposed built development or land use change in the Outer Green Belt, particularly where proposals require resource consent.

- *District plan rules (statutory)* to control activities that would affect the open space or conservation values of the land
- *District plan ridgelines and hilltops overlay (statutory)* - to assess proposed development within the overlay area in terms of criteria aimed at avoiding visually obtrusive development. The overlay area covers much of the Outer Green Belt but not the less visually prominent areas, such as lower slopes and valleys, and some places where the overlay was modified during the plan change process.



4.4 Culture and heritage

4.4.1 Objectives

1. To identify, recognise, protect and interpret the cultural and heritage sites, features and values of the Outer Green Belt
2. To tell the stories of the places and people of the Outer Green Belt and the part they have played in the history and development of Wellington, including the story of the Outer Green Belt itself.

4.4.2 Policies

4.4.2.1 Recognition and protection of cultural and historical features

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|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognise that the Outer Green Belt is part of a broader cultural landscape of great significance to mana whenua and work with mana whenua to protect its mauri 2. Recognise, respect and protect wāhi tapu (sacred sites), sites of significance to mana whenua or other Māori sites listed in the district plan and other places on the Outer Green Belt known to be significant to Māori, in consultation with the appropriate iwi. Discuss proposed activity in the vicinity of these sites and places with mana whenua before the activity starts 3. Continue to identify, recognise and protect other cultural and heritage sites, archaeological sites and | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> valued cultural landscapes on the Outer Green Belt in a manner reflecting their value and significance, in consultation with any directly affected groups or individuals 4. Manage heritage, archaeological sites and cultural landscapes (including wāhi tapu) to maintain their integrity and assist visitor appreciation 5. Work with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, mana whenua, historic societies and interested individuals and groups to research cultural, archaeological and heritage values of the Outer Green Belt, manage recognised sites of significance, and develop interpretive material. |
|--|---|

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

a) Develop and maintain an inventory of all sites and features of cultural and heritage interest or value within the Outer Green Belt	N	ongoing
b) Where the significance and nature of cultural and heritage sites warrants, prepare heritage conservation plans to guide future protection measures and management	N	5-10 yrs
c) Undertake an archaeological assessment of the Outer Green Belt to identify and protect archaeological sites. By law, any modification or destruction of an archaeological site must be guided by an archaeological authority	N	1-2 yrs
d) Identify places where planting, regeneration and vegetation may damage heritage, archaeological sites and cultural landscapes, including wāhi tapu. Establish a plan to record and manage the cultural heritage values of these places	N	3-5 yrs
e) Undertake a study to identify valued cultural landscapes, including wāhi tapu, in consultation with iwi and other stakeholders.	N	5-10 yrs

4.4.2.2 Interpreting culture and heritage

1. Develop interpretive material to assist visitors to appreciate the Outer Green Belt's history, according to an Outer Green Belt interpretation plan, taking into account the principles in the Council's urban ecology-biodiversity interpretation framework where subject matter overlaps with that framework.

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

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| a) Develop a heritage interpretation plan as part of an overall Outer Green Belt interpretation plan (see 4.6.2.5 Interpretation) to guide how to tell citizens and visitors about the many and diverse historical and cultural features of the Outer Green Belt, via various media. | N | 1-2 yrs |
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Explanation

The Outer Green Belt provides a unique perspective into the cultural landscape of the Wellington region, including views of Te Whanganui-a-Tara/ Wellington Harbour, Raukawa Moana (Cook Strait), Te Waipounamu (South Island), north to Kāpiti and Mana islands and large tracts of land and coast between. Views encompass the lands of both Taranaki Whānui and Ngāti Toa as well as the lands and waters of tribal groups who preceded them. This includes Kupe, the explorer credited with discovering Aotearoa, and Tara, after whom the harbour is named. The strong connection iwi have with this cultural landscape and the indigenous flora and fauna they support, should be woven into the themes of the interpretation plan.

Similarly, as described in Section 3.4, the Outer Green Belt is rich in history associated with colonial times, farming, city development and changing attitudes to environmental use and management. Popular elevated viewpoints such as Mt Kaukau or Wrights Hill are ideal for seeing the Outer Green Belt and its heritage in the context of the wider landscape and city. The themes outlined in Section 3.4 are no more than a preliminary summary and more research and documentation will be necessary to maintain a record of what we know and to provide the basis for interpretation.

4.4.2.3 Place names

1. Where there are both Māori and European place names, use both on signs and maps of the Outer Green Belt
2. New names for areas, features or places will be determined in conjunction with iwi, including joint names, under the Council's *Naming Policy Te Māpihi Maurea*
3. Consider the adoption of an appropriate Māori name for the Outer Green Belt which is complementary to the existing name.

Explanation

Many existing Māori and European place names in the Outer Green Belt add to the sense of place. Some names reflect ways that mana whenua and later settlers interpreted features in the landscape, while other names reflect past activities and the people who shaped local history.

Using traditional and new Māori names for various places and features in the Outer Green Belt is a way of recognising mana whenua's long connection with the land and highlighting a sense of the cultural landscape. It is also one way of implementing the Council's *Te Tauihu: Te Reo Māori Policy* in support of revitalising te reo.



4.5 Recreation and access

The Outer Green Belt provides a large area of land that supports outdoor recreation in Wellington and community aspirations for Wellington to be a liveable, 'green', active and connected city²³. Its large scale means it can provide for extensive outdoor recreation and enjoyment, even as the city's population grows, helping to meet needs and desires for active, healthy communities and lifestyles.

4.5.1 Objectives

1. To provide or allow for both passive and active recreational activities on the Outer Green Belt that are accessible to a broad section of the community and are environmentally sustainable
2. To facilitate opportunities on the Outer Green Belt for people to get active in the outdoors, have fun and be in contact with nature
3. To manage recreation and access in the Outer Green Belt in the context of recognising that the natural environment setting is a key part of the experience provided and is valued by the various user groups
4. To provide recreational opportunities on the Outer Green Belt principally through an interconnected network of paths, tracks and routes, well-linked to local communities, and catering for a range of user interests, abilities, fitness and skills
5. To complete the Skyline Track from Porirua to the south coast
6. To apply the principle of manaakitanga (hospitality, care and respect for others) in the way access and enjoyment of the Outer Green Belt is managed - for local, regional, national and international visitors.

4.5.2 Policies

4.5.2.1 Recreation

1. Provide for a wide range of informal outdoor recreational activities appropriate to the natural or rural environments of the Outer Green Belt landscape (see Part 6, Rules for more on types of activity)
2. Provide outdoor recreational infrastructure (access, tracks, signage and amenities) to facilitate safe recreational access and enjoyment, while maintaining the undeveloped, rugged and diverse landscape character of the Outer Green Belt
3. Encourage access for all to the Outer Green Belt by providing information about public transport connections to key destinations
4. Promote the health and wellbeing benefits of the Outer Green Belt as a place with opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, contact with nature and community involvement
5. Provide play opportunities in the form of unstructured creative play for all ages on the Outer

Green Belt based upon exploring and learning about natural environments

6. Promote the Outer Green Belt to Wellington's residents and visitors for its outdoor recreation opportunities in a unique landscape setting.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt is a wonderful recreational resource on the edge of the city area that offers uniquely 'Wellington' outdoor recreation opportunities. Experiencing the continuous ridgeline landscape with its variety of 'wild' places, including open hilltops, bush and stream valleys, is particularly suited to activities such as walking, tramping, running, biking and horse riding, which involve movement through the natural and rural settings. Under the Reserves Act, the Outer Green Belt's scenic reserves are for the purpose of protecting and preserving the

²³ *Our City Tomorrow, Tō Tātou Taone a Āpōpō, What's Next?* (2017) Wellington City Council.

scenery, natural features and landscapes for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, enjoyment and use of the public. A balance between these two purposes is needed.

There is growing evidence of the human need for contact with nature and the role it plays in health and wellbeing to individuals and communities. Seeing natural places and having access to them in everyday life is one of the things people value about Wellington.

Informal activities that require little infrastructure other than tracks and are based primarily on experiencing the relatively undeveloped landscape are considered the most appropriate. Simply enabling access to open spaces close to nature can be enough and, so, buildings and structures away from entrances will be rare. Suburban reserves and other types of open space sit adjacent to the Outer Green Belt and provide for other recreational experiences, such as playgrounds, neighbourhood parks, sports grounds and cemetery space.

Types of use and development of the Outer Green Belt are categorised as ‘allowed’, ‘managed’ or ‘prohibited’. See the Rules section for category lists, assessment criteria and permission processes.

Camping on the Outer Green Belt has, until now, been a prohibited activity but there have been calls to allow people to experience an overnight ‘wilderness’ camping experience close to the city. Most survey respondents in 2017 were either neutral

or unsupportive but 20-30 percent supported the idea. To provide something that equates to a ‘wilderness’ experience would require relatively remote locations with at least toilet and water facilities, bearing in mind hygiene and safety requirements in a public open space that is more highly used than the true national park type of ‘wilderness’. Keeping in mind the camping opportunities available within a reasonably short distance in GWRC’s regional parks, provision for an overnight outdoor camping service is not proposed at this stage. However, requests for one-off overnight camping with an educational focus will be considered through the events application process (see Part 6 Rules). Restricted camping in self-contained campervans is permitted beside the Te Kopahou Visitor Centre under bylaw.

The *Wellington Play Spaces Policy* recognises the benefits of informal play in natural environments, of which the Outer Green Belt offers a wealth of opportunities. The policy also aims to provide playgrounds equitably distributed across the city. Four playgrounds have been developed on the edge of the Outer Green Belt, which are managed under the *Suburban Reserves Management Plan*, at Brasenose Reserve, Khandallah Park, Silverstream Road and Montgomery Avenue. Opportunities to promote informal play in natural settings and the value of it to children and families will be explored through events, programmes and online content.

The Council has a role to play in the provision of spaces, places and tracks and, importantly, promotion and programmes to let people know about opportunities available and facilitate greater participation.

4.5.2.2 Track network

1. Maintain, develop and manage the Outer Green Belt track (access) network in accordance with the network principles in the Council’s *Open Space Access Plan* (OSAP), including catering for
 - a) A wide range of people’s skills, fitness, abilities and interests
 - b) Minority specialist track users proportional to numbers of users
 - c) Easy access to key destinations
 - d) Some tracks specifically designed to enable access for those with limited mobility.
2. Improve the track network by
 - a) Completing the Skyline Track as a continuous shared track spanning the entire length of the Outer Green Belt, following the high ground of the main ridgelines wherever possible
 - b) Upgrading and adding to lateral tracks to provide adequate Skyline Track exit and entry points, fill gaps in local connections to adjacent communities and provide more local loop walks
3. Manage all tracks in the Outer Green Belt for shared foot and bike-based use unless otherwise specified

- in the OSAP, or in this plan, or as a result of local or wider network analysis of track condition and use²⁴
4. Maintain a network of farm-type vehicle tracks that serve as shared-use recreational tracks while also providing for (where necessary) Council management, utility servicing²⁵ and emergency/civil defence vehicle access
 5. Allow for varied track types and widths in the network, including within single routes, to reflect the local landscape character and provide for the choice and variety of experience that recreational users prefer
 6. Design, upgrade and maintain tracks to the appropriate track specifications in the OSAP, bearing in mind that
 - Some tracks in suitable locations should be specifically designed for universal accessibility
 - The track network should reflect and not detract from the relatively undeveloped, natural or rural character of the Outer Green Belt landscape
 - Tracks should be designed to minimise environmental impact, taking account the principles for ecologically-sustainable tracks in the OSAP, and to minimise long-term maintenance
 7. Consult with the local community and user groups when considering proposals for any new track that is not already identified in the OSAP or in this plan and assess under the guidelines in the OSAP, taking particular account of
 - a) The track's role and need for it within the Outer Green Belt and wider Wellington track network, including any gaps or duplications in the existing network, levels of user demand and long-term maintenance
 - b) The principles for ecologically-sustainable tracks, the track assessment criteria and the track work priority criteria in the OSAP, which
 - c) The impact that any proposed changes/new development would have on different track users, the extent to which the network and user experience would be improved, and the potential to achieve shared benefits
 8. In assessing the environmental impacts of proposed track work, seek qualified ecological, professional track building, and, where appropriate, forester's advice
 9. Require track development projects carried out by volunteer track builders in the Outer Green Belt to have been first assessed and approved and that the volunteer track builders' operational process proposed under the *Open Space Action Plan 2016*²⁶ be applied to all volunteer track building and maintenance projects in the Outer Green Belt
 10. Support the integration of the Outer Green Belt track network within the regional trails framework²⁷, subject to the policies in this plan and the Open Space Access Plan taking precedence over any policies in the framework that are at variance, in particular with regard to the following proposed regional trail classifications
 - a) Mākara Peak Mountain Bike Park - proposed signature trail
 - b) Skyline Track, which is also part of the national Te Araroa Walkway route as far south as Khandallah Park - proposed signature trail
 - c) Polhill Reserve (adjacent to Outer Green Belt)/ Brooklyn Turbine/Te Kopahou tracks - proposed regional trail
 11. Integrate the Outer Green Belt track network with wider existing and proposed tracks outlined in the *Open Space Access Plan*, namely, links across the Porirua city boundary to Rangituhi /Colonial Knob, from Otari-Wilton's Bush west to Mākara Road and the coast beyond, and from Mākara Peak Mountain Bike Park down Karori Stream to the south coast.

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

Action

- | | | |
|--|---|---------|
| a) Continue to develop well-graded side tracks to bypass or completely replace very steep sections of existing tracks, especially the 4WD sections of the Skyline Track. | E | ongoing |
|--|---|---------|

²⁴ Any changes to track use status will be subject to Council Committee approval as per the OSAP requirement.

²⁵ As required by legislation or other legal right of access and to a standard appropriate in the Outer Green Belt context.

²⁶ P.59

²⁷ *Wellington Regional Trails for the Future: A strategic framework for trails in the Wellington Region (2017).*

Explanation

Variety and choice: The Outer Green Belt contains an extensive track network currently totalling some 160 kilometres in length or about 42 percent of the Council's total track network. Collectively, the existing network already has the capacity to offer a range of experiences in different settings and in different ways, including some of the city's most challenging and rugged tracks and environments. For instance, a single excursion might simply be a gentle bush walk or it could follow a range of gentle and steep tracks through bush, stream, pasture and hilltop environments. Some people prefer to use particular types of tracks, others enjoy using a range of track types. Some people enjoy exploring on their own while others prefer to do so in organised groups or in events.

The intention in this plan and the *Open Space Access Plan* is to facilitate as wide a range of recreational opportunities suited to the Outer Green Belt environment as possible. As described in section 3.5.1, more than 70 percent of users on the Outer Green Belt are usually on foot, engaging in a wide range of activities (walking, running, trap checking, orienteering.²⁸). Correspondingly, most of the track network is available for on-foot use. The track network is also used by other types of track users. Mountain biking has grown in popularity and more than 20 percent of users now usually bike when on the Outer Green Belt. Horse riders represent a smaller group but there has been a need to provide more horse riding opportunities for some time, to which parts of the Outer Green Belt are well suited. As a general approach, provision for different user groups will be in proportion to the numbers of users, for example, horse riders or grade five mountain bikers represent a small proportion of users, so a small proportion of the track network will be prioritised for their use.

Planning. The Outer Green Belt is of a large enough scale that it can accommodate many tracks but it is also a place that people like because it is less developed, less urban and does, literally, have open spaces. While it can accommodate some of the variety that people prefer - narrow/wide, rough/smooth, steep/graded, accessible/remote - it is not possible, nor desirable, to have all these options everywhere if the track network is to reflect local landscape character and be cost-effective.

Requests for new track development need to be considered at the broad scale in the context of the wider city and regional track network and the considerable existing track infrastructure, which represents both past capital investment and future maintenance. New tracks can also have impacts on other values such as natural values, existing usage patterns and user expectations. All these factors need to be weighed up and some proposed tracks will not be built if there are significant impacts, limited demand and duplication of existing track provision. In assessing the impacts, specialist field advice should be sought from an ecologist, professional track builder skilled in good track design, and, if in a plantation forest, a forester to ensure trees are not destabilised by cutting through root systems. Planning track work will be consistent with Our Capital Spaces and the Open Space Access Plan, which prioritise completion of the Skyline Track and linking it in with a secondary network of local tracks.

While most of the track network is available for foot-based use, there has been community concern about the apparent focus in recent years on developing mountain bike tracks. That development, much of it carried out by mountain bikers, has been focussed on providing for a new and still growing recreational activity, which now represents more than 20 percent of track users. Considerable further development is proposed in the bike-prioritised Mākara Peak Mountain Bike Park (see Part 5, Management Sector 5). Elsewhere, new tracks are proposed to meet needs for improved access/loop routes and, in some cases, to manage user conflicts. These are discussed further in the management sections.

At some stage, the limit of desirable track capacity will be reached - at that point track building will need to cease and the focus be purely on maintenance and way finding.

Some special interest groups and individuals, who enjoy building tracks as a recreational activity in itself, have been building unplanned and unsanctioned tracks. This activity can lead to issues of track proliferation, confusing layouts, safety risk, user conflict and, in places, poor track design with environmental damage. For this reason, track building

²⁸ Outer Green Belt Survey 2017/18

is to be authorised first by the Council and carried out according to approved guidelines, so that the track builders' enthusiasm and skill is directed towards shared community outcomes.

Compatibility of activities. A great attribute of the Outer Green Belt is that there is plentiful space to offer a diversity of settings and range of activities in the track network but that does not mean every activity can, or should be, available in every area. The varied topography and local character makes different areas more, or less, suited to track development and types of activity. Compatibility issues that can arise between different users are being managed by way of a current Council project to develop protocols and, within the Outer Green Belt, designating different tracks and/or areas for shared, prioritised or exclusive use. As demand for tracks grows, it is possible that the specifications for certain tracks may need to be changed. In these situations, the assessment process outlined in the track network policies in the Open Space Access Plan will be applied.

Shared tracks are most suited to the existing farm/utility access tracks where there is sufficient space for different users to pass comfortably. Some users don't like these wider tracks and advocate for a wider choice of track type and experiences tailored for particular users, preferably to the exclusion of other users. For example, mountain bikers have asked for more flowing or 'interesting' tracks, and runners for narrow 'challenging' single tracks. As stated already, the Outer Green Belt is large and can accommodate a lot of tracks but it is not possible to cater for all the specific user needs everywhere without compromising natural values and/or the expectations of other user groups. As a starting point, the Council proposes to develop the type of track network in proportion to the main user groups. Ultimately some compromise is required.

Design and maintenance. The existing infrastructure has been developed over many years, comprising old farm tracks, utility company maintenance tracks, informal routes worn in historically by grazing stock and by people, and purpose-built tracks for recreation. The tracks are, therefore, of variable widths, construction and gradients. While that variety adds to the interest and choice of tracks, it also presents some issues, such as difficult access on very steep gradients,

banks slumping on old farm tracks, preventing 4WD service vehicle access, and potential erosion and rutting on poorly constructed tracks, especially those without solid subgrade. The track specifications in the Open Space Access Plan will generally guide track upgrades and development to improve track sustainability but, in places, rougher less accessible tracks might be preserved to provide preferred options for some user groups, such as mountain runners.

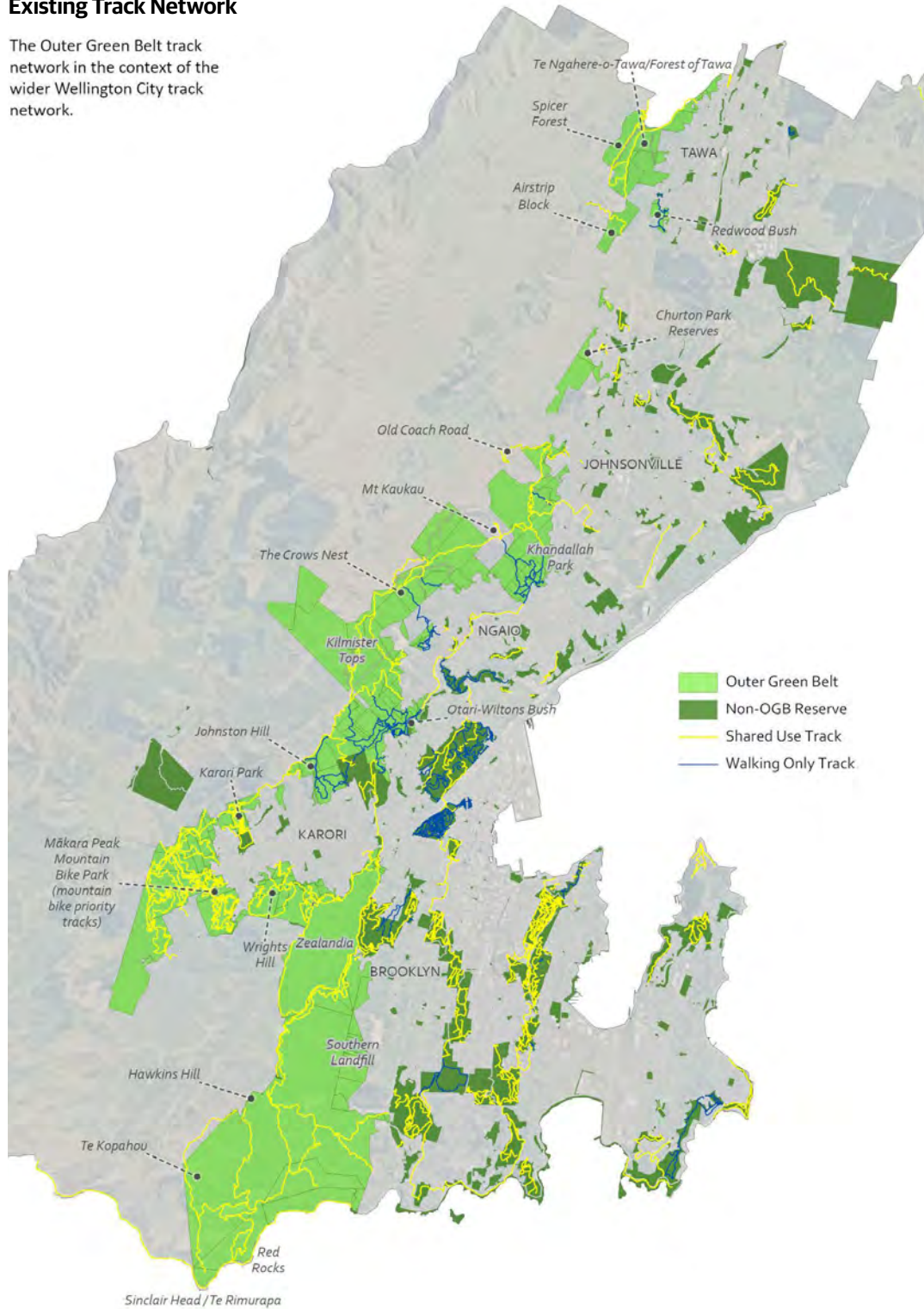
While the Outer Green Belt's rugged nature is an essential part of what it has to offer as a recreational environment, the steep grades on many stretches of track may be off-putting to people who would otherwise enjoy the ridgetop environments. For instance, while the Skyline Track is undulating, some short very steep stretches are based on old farm tracks that were never designed for walking. Therefore, the Council will continue to construct side tracks at easier gradients to bypass the worst of the steep grades and consider completely retiring some very steep sections of track once suitable alternatives are in place. Ultimately, a more gently undulating route along the skyline could be among the choices available. While most of the Outer Green Belt topography is unsuitable for disabled access, there is provision at a few places, such as at Wrights Hill and the Brooklyn wind turbine. These and other opportunities will be identified as part of the accessibility and inventory planning work outlined in the Open Space Access Plan (Appendix 3).

Regional Trails for the Future Framework²⁹. Local government agencies and DoC are collaborating towards the Wellington region becoming a world-class destination for trail-based outdoor recreation. The framework provides a common overall direction, with potential synergies, particularly in promoting visitor opportunities, but the councils remain autonomous. In the Outer Green Belt tracks will be managed to reflect the varying character of areas along routes. In the case of the Skyline Track, most of it follows pre-existing farm or utility tracks that are already of suitable width to accommodate increased numbers of walkers and bikers. Upgrades are likely to affect small sections and be in the nature of some widening or providing for different users where existing track width is limited, and/or easing gradients.

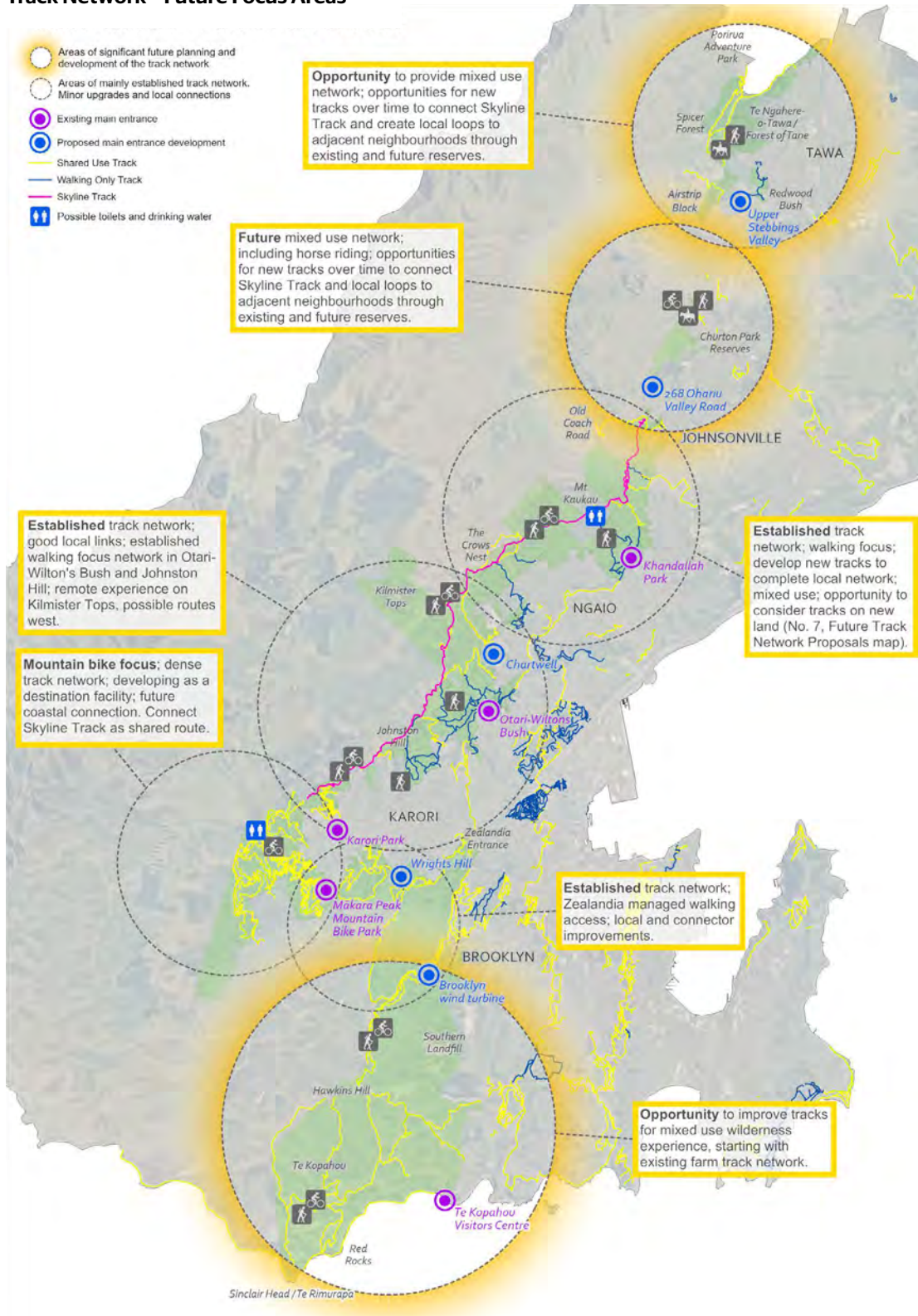
²⁹ Wellington Regional Trails for the Future: A strategic framework for trails in the Wellington Region (2017)

Existing Track Network

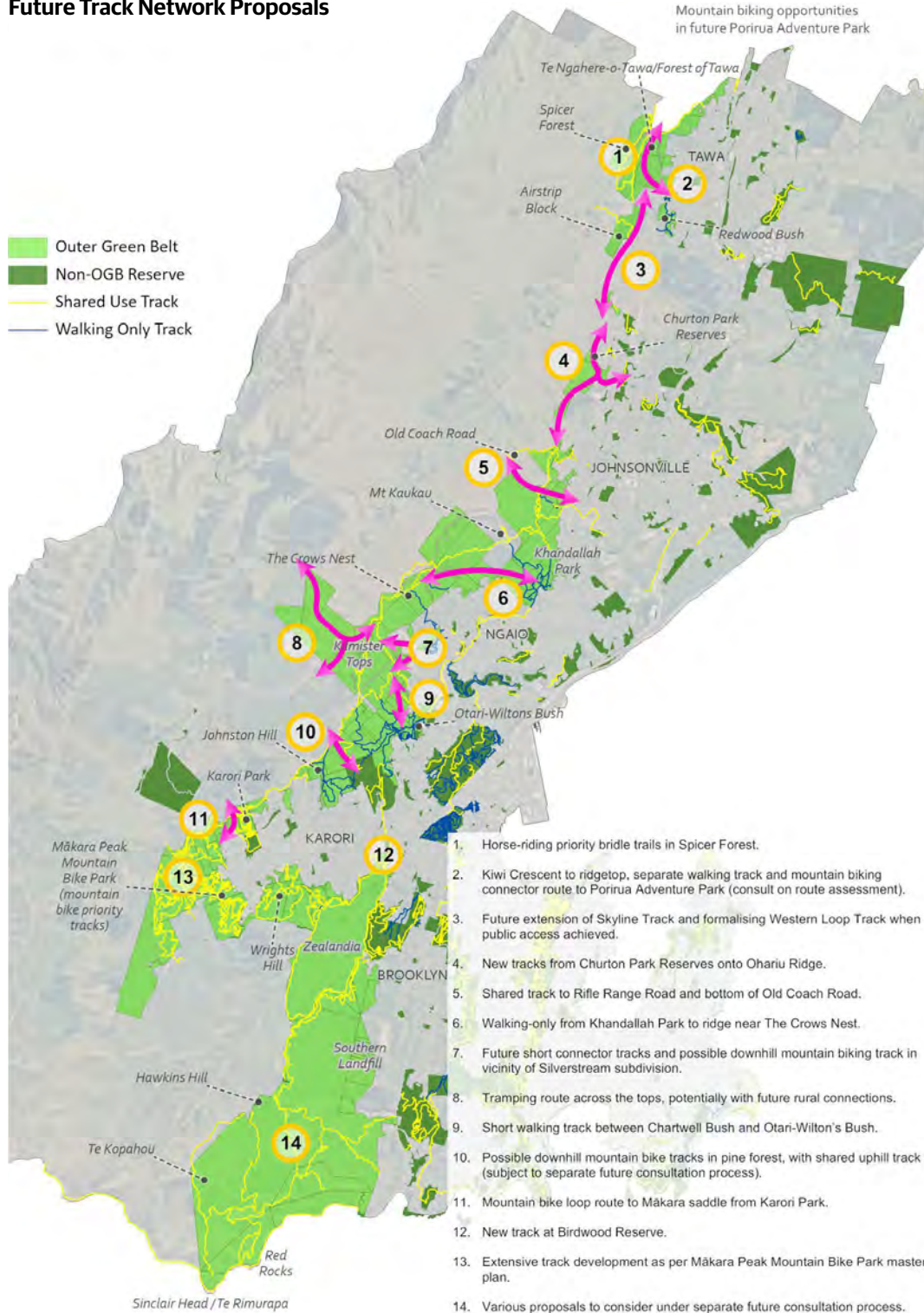
The Outer Green Belt track network in the context of the wider Wellington City track network.



Track Network - Future Focus Areas



Future Track Network Proposals



4.5.2.3 Entrances, amenities and way-finding

1. Provide on-site facilities and information to support visitors' safety and enjoyment without detracting from the predominantly natural landscape setting
2. Manage and develop a hierarchy of entrances to the track network to provide an equitable distribution of access points with corresponding levels of information and facilities (see track network future focus areas map), bearing in mind the proximity of other public facilities, for example, in Porirua reserves, at Karori Park sports ground.
3. Develop visitor amenities at key nodes as follows:
 - a) Main roadside entrances - parking, toilets, drinking water, map board, information about the entire Outer Green Belt
 - b) Secondary roadside entrances - map board with basic user information
 - c) Key off-road destinations/track nodes where usage and distance from roadside facilities warrants - composting toilets, drinking water, map board and how to find out more online.
4. Provide site furniture such as seats, picnic tables and lookout structures to facilitate visitor enjoyment of the outdoor environment without cluttering or detracting from the existing landscape setting
5. Encourage users to 'pack in, pack out' their own rubbish through signage and online information and provide rubbish receptacles only at main roadside entrances
6. Use on-site signage, map boards, way markers and interpretation to inform visitors about:
 - Recreation opportunities, including the range of track types, routes and loops and links to other nearby reserves
 - Location of facilities such as toilets and drinking water
 - Where feasible, give distances and typical walking times on major routes
 - Potential hazards (e.g. very steep grades, extreme weather risk)
 - Permitted types of user
 - Behaviour on shared tracks, including giving way to people on foot;
 - Public/private land boundaries and, where relevant, conditions of access over private land
 - Points of interest and the environmental and heritage values of the Outer Green Belt
7. Provide and promote reference to similar information in online digital formats, such as the Welly Walks app and other social media. Also provide in paper brochures as necessary (see also 4.6.2.5, Interpretation)
8. Use easily recognised pictograms, consistent with the appropriate New Zealand Standards for outdoor recreation symbols, and/or colour coding of routes to assist visitors find their way on the track network
9. Adapt the Council's standard park signage systems and corporate visual standards to reflect a consistent Outer Green Belt identity (see also 4.6.2.4, Outer Green Belt Identity)
10. Advocate for and provide information about public transport networks that are connected to Outer Green Belt track networks.

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

a) Prepare a conceptual development plan for the main entrances and key destinations/track nodes where facilities are to be developed and identify priorities, timing and funding requirements	N	1-2 yrs
b) Investigate composting toilet options and feasibility for use in more remote areas of the Outer Green Belt	E	1-2 yrs
c) Investigate funding opportunities with potential partners, e.g. Transpower.	N	ongoing

Explanation

The main entrances have been identified to provide key access points to the Outer Green Belt at reasonably evenly spaced intervals along its length. Their purpose will be to provide essential visitor information and

basic comfort stops, particularly for people on longer excursions such as the Skyline Track or multi-day walks traversing the Outer Green Belt. As the map shows, toilets and water are already available at five

main entrances but none are at elevated locations, which are the most accessible for Skyline Track users. Development of elevated main entrances will be prioritised, so people on long distance routes will not have to descend into valleys for toilet and water facilities.

Of the main entrances identified in the track network future focus areas map, Otari-Wilton's Bush, Karori Park, Mākara Peak and Te Kopahou have already been developed and there will be improvements at the Khandallah Park entrance associated with the swimming pool upgrade. Two main entrances are needed in management sectors 1 and 2, one in Upper Stebbings Valley and another at the saddle of Ohariu Valley Road. Their development will be contingent on first connecting access through the Outer Green Belt in these sectors but will then be given priority. In the meantime, the existing drive-on access points at Wrights Hill and Brooklyn wind turbine will be developed as main entrances, to enhance their popularity as broadly accessible viewpoints.

Secondary entrances are at key access points in local communities, from which a range of tracks and loops can be taken. Tertiary-level entrances are simply local connections into the network.

The 2017/2018 survey indicated demand for more amenities, in particular toilets, drinking water and rubbish bins. Locating these facilities mainly at the main roadside entrances helps to minimise environmental and visual impact in off-road areas

as well as costs. However, there are exceptions, such as the summit of Mt Kaukau, where the intensity of visitor use at a distance from toilets is causing problems. Composting toilets are a potential option in such situations. Facilities appropriate to neighbourhood park use on the edge of the Outer Green Belt are generally managed under the suburban or northern reserves management plans, for example, Khandallah Park picnic and swimming pool area and Montgomery Avenue playground.

Rubbish bins will generally not be provided except at main entrances, where there will already be a concentration of site furniture and regular servicing requirements. A pack in, pack out policy will be publicised and promoted.

Updated map boards will gradually be replaced or installed, larger ones at main entrances and the start and end of main routes, and smaller ones at other entrances. Generally, way-finding markers only will be used on the walkways themselves, to reduce 'clutter' and as extreme weather conditions can be hard on map boards.

Currently colour-coded way-finding markers have been used along the Skyline Track from Old Coach Road to Mt Kaukau. The colour coding will be continued. On other tracks way-finding will continue to be by way of route and destination naming, and standard pictogram information (e.g. shared track, walking-only track, dogs on leash).

4.5.2.4 Dog walking

1. Provide for the reasonable exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners
2. Inform dog owners prominently of the need to keep dogs on a leash in all areas of the Outer Green Belt except in designated dog exercise areas, stressing the need for owners to prevent their dogs coming into conflict with other users, with grazing stock and with vulnerable wildlife (e.g. kākā)
3. Encourage dog owners to use dog exercise areas for off-leash dog walking by providing information about the localities of dog exercise areas.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt has a great deal of open space where people are frequently tempted to let their dogs

off the leash. When they do, though, compatibility problems can arise with other users, with grazing stock and with native wildlife. Already there have been instances of dogs killing or injuring native birds, such as kākā, and, in future, the risk will increase as more vulnerable species are reintroduced. e.g. kiwi. In the Outer Green Belt 2017/18 survey, most respondents supported exercising dogs on leash but there was less support for unleashed dogs.

Currently, five off-leash exercise areas of varying sizes are available in the Outer Green Belt located at Flinders Park in Johnsonville, Sersi Terrace track in Khandallah, Silverstream Road Reserve in Ngaio, Karori Park in Karori and Wrights Hill parade ground in Karori. Some respondents in the 2017/18 survey and

submitters on the draft of this plan asked for more dog exercise areas. Suitable sites in edge areas could be considered, subject to assessing the effects in the

context of specific sites and weighing up the costs/benefits of allocating an area for single rather than multiple use.

4.5.2.5 Motorised vehicles

1. Prohibit private vehicle access except under exceptional circumstances and on a one-off basis or where legal access is provided for (e.g. unformed legal roads or where legal right of way exists)
2. Limit motorised vehicle-based recreational use to organised events that have been approved and had permits issued (see 6.6.3. Rules), taking into account, in addition to the criteria in that section:
 - The number of vehicles involved in a given event
 - The type of vehicles
 - Frequency of motorised vehicle events in the particular part of the Outer Green Belt
 - The suitability of proposed routes
 - The impact on other recreational users and the environment.

Explanation

Motorised vehicles can detract from recreational users' experience of the Outer Green Belt as a natural environment setting. Therefore, motorised vehicle access is limited. A significant change in this plan is the extension of the Outer Green Belt to the south coast, which means the unpaved road around the coast from the Te Kopahou Visitor Centre is now part of the Outer Green Belt. Careful management of access along the road is required to provide for a range of recreational users, including those seeking 4WD-drive access

around the coast, as well as for owners of historic baches on the coast. See Part 5, Management Sector 7.

Off-road driving is recognised as a recreational use and local 4WD clubs have run one-off driving events on the Outer Green Belt before, under permits. Provided these events are of a sufficiently small scale, keep to agreed 4WD tracks and are sufficiently infrequent that other recreational users are rarely affected by them, the Council regards these activities as enabling a particular type of recreational group to access and enjoy the Outer Green Belt environment. There could be occasions where infrequent one-off events could enable some people to access the Outer Green Belt who would otherwise be physically unable to do so, such as a 4WD club providing transport to enable a community group to carry out a botanical survey.

Motorised vehicle access may be part of a commercial activity proposal. The appropriateness of that access will be assessed against the values of the Outer Green Belt and as part of any licence or concession application that would be required prior to any commercial activity operating on the Outer Green Belt (refer to Part 6, Rules).

Council staff and utility providers will require motorised vehicle access from time to time for maintenance and management purposes.

4.5.2.6 Organised outdoor events and programmes

1. Encourage and support outdoor recreation events and programmes on the Outer Green Belt that encourage people's use of it and sense of connection to the landscape setting and natural environment
2. Apply the rules in section 6.6: Managed Activities when considering applications for organised events and outdoor programmes and when setting conditions of approval, taking into account the assessment criteria and the suitability of the

proposal to the Outer Green Belt environment and/or particular area involved, and the impact on the environment and other users, of:

- a) The proposed scale
- b) The frequency
- c) The temporary nature of infrastructure and services required to provide the event or programme
- d) Compatibility with other users and the possible need to temporarily restrict access to some areas

e) Cumulative effects of the event or programme being considered alongside other events and programmes also happening in the Outer Green Belt

f) Opportunities for partnership with event organisers to benefit the Outer Green Belt, e.g. contributions to environmental outcomes associated with an event.

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| a) Work with WellingtonNZ ³⁰ to investigate the feasibility costs and benefits of developing appropriate signature 'Outer Green Belt' events to promote it as a regional outdoor recreation destination and encourage people of various abilities to explore and enjoy what it has to offer. | N | 1-2 yrs |
|---|---|---------|

Explanation

Organised events and programmes are great opportunities to promote awareness of the Outer Green Belt, encourage participation in outdoor recreation, and showcase Wellington, with its unique combination of landscape and outdoor recreation opportunity. Examples to date include the mountain biking competitions based at Mākara Peak Mountain Bike Park, the Wellington Urban Ultra 2K (WUU-2K) mid-winter trail running event, the Kids' Mt Kaukau Challenge organised as a fundraiser by Khandallah School, Bio-Blitz community science days at Otari-Wilton's Bush and annual 'Play in the Park' theatrical productions, run by the Khandallah Arts Theatre.

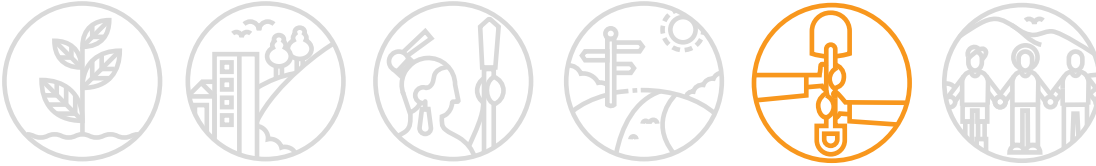
It is likely that, as the Outer Green Belt becomes better known and increasingly connected, the ideas and demand for organised events will increase. It will be important to manage that demand to strike a balance between the expectations of some users who want the Outer Green Belt to be a peaceful escape from the city and others who enjoy participating in organised and, perhaps, large-scale events. The frequency and scale of events are important considerations in this. For instance, how frequently could Mākara Peak Mountain Bike Park be closed for mountain biking competitions before non-competitors felt disenfranchised? Elsewhere, while one 4WD excursion a year might feel like the exception, if it happened every month, would others feel the off-road atmosphere was being compromised?

Another way in which organised activities can occur is through commercial operations. For instance, guided walking or cycling tours or trips would potentially bring visibly organised groups into the Outer Green Belt. Such business activities could benefit the city economy by adding visitor attractions but could also potentially detract from the sense of free public open space if the groups were too large, poorly managed or too many.

The Outer Green Belt is a very large open space with the capacity to host a range of events and programmes. It is an attraction and it also plays a role in helping achieve community, health and wellbeing objectives by offering outdoor access and enjoyment. A regular signature 'Outer Green Belt' event (or events programme) could potentially be developed and promoted through social media channels, to attract residents and visitors alike, tied to promoting awareness of the Outer Green Belt. This could help achieve Outcome (iii) in Our Capital Spaces, contributing to Wellington's outstanding quality of life through being a world-class walking and biking destination, with regional and national events.

Where the limits of organised events lie is, as yet, unknown, especially as informal recreation use is also increasing. In the meantime, events will be handled as 'managed activities', requiring an application and assessment process, and any approvals will be subject to special conditions aimed at minimising the impacts and optimising benefits.

³⁰ See <https://www.wellingtonnz.com/discover/>



4.6 Community and identity

4.6.1 Objectives

1. To encourage and support appropriate involvement of mana whenua, individuals, neighbouring land owners, community groups and organisations in working towards the Outer Green Belt vision
2. To foster people's sense of community, belonging, health and wellbeing by encouraging individual and collective participation in caring and advocating for the Outer Green Belt
3. To promote awareness of the Outer Green Belt as a community resource that contributes to Wellington's sense of place and people's quality of life.

4.6.2 Policies

4.6.2.1 Partnership with mana whenua

1. Encourage Treaty partners and the wider Māori community to help determine how this plan can be implemented, including
 - a) Working in partnership to co-manage sites of significance to mana whenua
 - b) Supporting Māori community-based groups to practise tikanga and to use open spaces in the Outer Green Belt for the development of indigenous knowledge and traditional activities, such as raranga (weaving), for the benefit of all
2. Ensure that mana whenua are kept informed about Outer Green Belt management through regular reporting
3. Use and encourage more use of te reo Māori in relation to place names and the key tikanga concepts carried into this plan.

Explanation

The Council's relationship with mana whenua³¹ is managed through Memoranda of Understanding with the mandated iwi entities, Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated, based on principles of partnership, participation and protection of taonga and cultural heritage. The Council has a responsibility to take

account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making processes.

The Outer Green Belt is a recent concept that does not necessarily reflect mana whenua's relationship with the land, either traditionally or currently. The way in which mana whenua wish to collaborate in managing the Outer Green Belt needs to be explored further as well as opportunities to be active partners in activities such as catchment management, habitat restoration, pest control and trail development. Supporting iwi's capacity and capability to be active partners is an aspect to be considered.

The Council's *Te Tauīhu: Te Reo Māori Policy* aims to support more everyday usage of te reo Māori. Recognition and use of Māori place names is one way to do so but to also strengthen local identity and understanding of Māori heritage. Māori terms for natural elements and resources are already being used more, such as Māori names for plants and animals. Various tikanga also encapsulate concepts that align closely with the values and objectives of this plan, such as kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (hospitality, care and respect for others).

³¹ *Mana whenua* means customary authority exercised by an iwi or hapu in an identified area.

4.6.2.2 Community partnership

1. Inform community groups and local residents about what is happening in their part of the Outer Green Belt, to raise awareness of nature, recreational opportunities, development projects and events in local areas and encourage participation
2. Encourage, support and provide opportunities for individuals and groups of all ages, and businesses, to help manage, maintain and develop the physical environment, outdoor recreational use and general awareness of the Outer Green Belt, and help monitor outcomes
3. Work with other agencies, such as DoC and GWRC, to co-ordinate management of overlapping interests and responsibilities, including instances where the Council manages DoC land for the department
4. Work collaboratively with communities and interest groups to co-design and explore funding options for projects within reserves
5. Encourage and support volunteers and volunteer groups who have a mandate to undertake proposed work by:
 - a) Communicating regularly and having clear agreements (usually Memoranda of Agreement) that define responsibilities and set out the group's objectives, health and safety requirements, and how achievements will be measured
 - b) Providing guidance to volunteers to help implement this plan and other Council work such as city-wide restoration planting and pest animal management programmes
 - c) Promoting collaboration and sharing of skills and resources between different volunteer groups
 - d) Helping volunteers to plan their activities realistically, taking into account the time needed for ongoing tasks such as planting maintenance, ongoing track maintenance or year-round trap checking
 - e) Providing practical advice, training and, subject to Council resourcing, assistance with tools and materials
 - f) Recognising and celebrating volunteers' efforts and achievements
6. Maintain open communication with volunteers, volunteer groups and communities, to constructively exchange feedback, knowledge and new ideas about how best to work together to achieve goals
7. Use technology to enable communities to participate, monitor outcomes and keep people informed about new initiatives and outcomes
8. Continue to support communities and community groups in organising and promoting local event initiatives (see 4.5.2.6, organised outdoor events and programmes).

Explanation

In recent years increasing numbers of individuals, community groups, businesses and neighbouring land owners have contributed hugely by volunteering their time to help manage the Outer Green Belt. Their activities include pest animal control, planting, site maintenance, track building, guiding visitors and monitoring ecosystem health. The Council, in return, offers advice, plants, materials and practical assistance. There are numerous benefits. More is achieved in managing our reserves than the Council could achieve without the extra help - volunteers often get huge satisfaction from helping to care for places they care about and contributing to a 'greater good', the exercise and contact with nature benefits people's health and wellbeing, and communities become more resilient as people meet and work towards common goals, potentially becoming better placed to help each other in hard times and emergencies.

The Council needs to invest time and resources into managing volunteer partnerships to foster a mutually beneficial relationship. To sustain people's enthusiasm, voluntary effort must be well-managed. An important aspect of this is to ensure that groups only take on what they can manage in terms of physical capability and time commitment. There is an opportunity for more collaboration between volunteer groups, given that a high proportion of volunteers tend to be young adults or over 60 years old. Groups often work separately but there can be practical and social benefits when people of different ages and backgrounds work alongside each other, combining different physical capabilities, objectives, skills and experience. Engaging with youth holds the potential for future kaitiaki of the Outer Green Belt.

Also important is the need to optimise positive outcomes in terms of the Council's overall management objectives and related budgets. Enthusiasm and the sense of ownership that grows from voluntary effort can lead to different perceptions about what should be done and how particular places should be used and managed. For instance, 'unofficial' track building in places has led to problems (see

4.5.2.2). At the same time, community groups often bring fresh ideas and local knowledge. Sometimes their ideas or projects might be of low priority within the Council's current work programme and resource allocations but the Council needs to be open to suggestions and consider adding ideas and projects to its future programme and budget allocations.

4.6.2.3 Partnership with neighbours

1. Advocate the Outer Green Belt vision to all neighbours through regular communication and information
2. Encourage neighbours to manage their land in ways that will help attain the Outer Green Belt vision by providing them with information, advice and, where resources permit, practical assistance
3. Inform and support neighbours about options, assistance and incentives that may be available for nature and heritage conservation initiatives on private land in collaboration with other agencies, including GWRC, DoC, QEII National Trust and Heritage New Zealand
4. Foster good neighbour relationships with owners of land adjoining the Outer Green Belt, in particular, seeking ways to mutually avoid, remedy or mitigate cross-boundary issues
5. Work with the Porirua City Council to connect and integrate open space management objectives across the northern Outer Green Belt boundary to Rangituhi/Colonial Knob and the Porirua Harbour catchment (see Part 5, Management Sector 1).

Explanation

The ridges of the Outer Green Belt are, as described in Parts 1 and 3 of this plan, an important feature in Wellington City, with multiple open space values. Some of these values, such as important native forest remnants, historic sites and riparian land also occur on neighbouring private land. Land owners are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainable land management. In places, land owners support the Outer Green Belt vision by allowing public access across their land. The Council recognises that neighbouring land owners will have their own land management objectives but seeks to collaborate with them to achieve compatible land management where possible. Land owners can be supported in this, depending on available resources, through such things as practical advice, assistance with weed control, pest animal control and planting, and placing protective covenants over areas of high open space value.

Good neighbour relationships help when dealing with cross-boundary issues that can arise such as boundary fencing, weed and pest animal control, fire risk, dog and cat control and access and trespass management. The 'good neighbour' principle applies not only to the farming land owners but also to the numerous urban residential neighbours who adjoin the Outer Green Belt reserves.

4.6.2.4 Outer Green Belt identity

1. Promote the Outer Green Belt to residents and visitors alike as a formative feature that contributes to Wellington's reputation as a beautiful, invigorating and liveable eco-city - and the uniquely 'Wellington' experience
2. Promote, in particular, the Outer Green Belt's wealth of:
 - Outdoor recreation opportunities and destinations
 - Nature-based attractions

- Opportunities to get involved in community and environmental care activities
3. Support and co-ordinate promotion of the main nature-based and recreational attractions located within the Outer Green Belt, such as Zealandia, Otari Wilton's Bush and Mākara Peak Mountain Bike Park
 4. Co-ordinate promotion of the Outer Green Belt with
 - a) Council-wide promotion of the Wellington's open spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities
 - b) The development and implementation of site-based projects (e.g. entrance development) and interpretation planning.

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

- | | | |
|--|---|---------|
| a) Develop a visual identity for the Outer Green Belt to ensure consistent and appropriate style in site development features, for example, park furniture and signage that reflects a low key, natural character. | N | 1-2 yrs |
|--|---|---------|

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt is a prominent feature in Wellington's landscape yet it is still not as well-known as it might be. Its sheer scale makes it a dominant feature in Wellington's landscape, visible from most parts of the central city and suburbs. Its typically 'Wellington' hills, wild nature and outdoor opportunities are an essential part of our Wellington identity at both local and city-wide levels. It is arguable that it contributes significantly to Wellington's top ranking in the 2018 Deutsche Bank liveable cities survey that compared quality of life

across 47 cities. Greater appreciation of what it does for Wellington, as described in Part 3, will be important in its protection and management over coming years, in the face of pressures for urban growth.

The development of a visual identity that can be used in signage, maps and other information will help to raise recognition of and awareness of the whole Outer Green Belt. The visual identity can also be quite subtle, such as guiding the low-key design of site furniture appropriate to the Outer Green Belt's rugged, natural character.

4.6.2.5 Interpretation

1. Develop interpretation material to assist visitors appreciate the Outer Green Belt's unique natural environment and heritage
2. Develop easily accessible information about the Outer Green Belt in a range of formats, including on-site, online and printed.

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

- | | | |
|--|---|---------|
| a) Develop a high-level interpretation plan for the whole Outer Green Belt with guiding principles and a broad implementation plan covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key messages and themes including interweaving nature/culture/history/sense of place • The target audiences and how to engage with them • How the interpretation will fit with and complement other Council interpretation plans (e.g. at Otari-Wilton's Bush, Mākara Peak or Zealandia). | N | 1-2 yrs |
|--|---|---------|

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt holds stories and meaning that are not widely known but can add to people's sense of place, understanding and appreciation of places and the Outer Green Belt as a whole. Community use of the

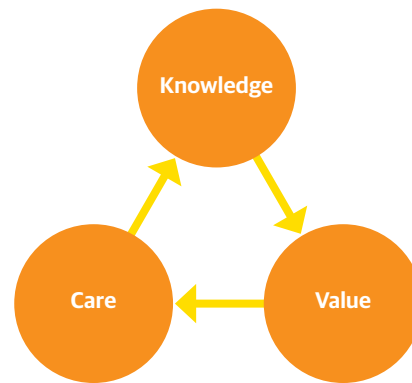
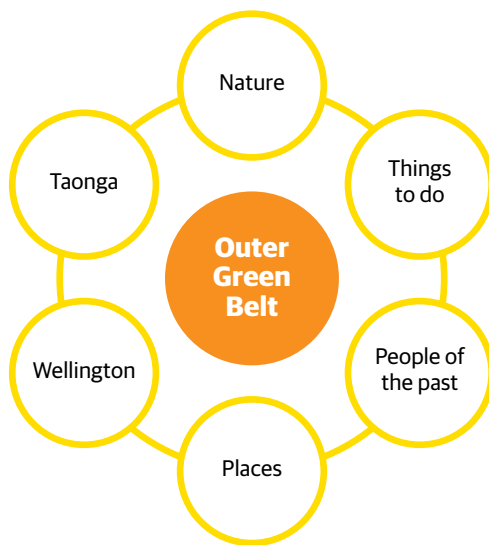
Outer Green Belt today builds on this sense of place and reflects the value afforded to this land.

An interpretation plan will provide the basis for telling the stories and guide which of the available media to

use. For instance, while physical on-site interpretation can work well for basic information, access to more detailed and/or interactive digital information could hold cost savings, help to avoid visual clutter on site, and widen the reach of interpretation to audiences who prefer, or are more accustomed to digital formats.

The Outer Green Belt has numerous interconnected stories and themes (e.g. the history of conservation

overlaps with themes about the present day plants and animals). Those stories also overlap with other information and interpretation plans such as the biodiversity interpretation framework being developed in relation to Our Natural Capital. Interweaving the various stories, while ensuring the key messages and stories are clear, could add to the richness and exciting possibilities for engaging a range of audiences.



Interpretation can provide a depth of meaning and sense of value that connects people to places

4.6.2.6 Education and research

1. Educate neighbours and the public whenever possible about principles of good ecological management on the Outer Green Belt, such as safe disposal of weeds and not feeding native birds except through planting suitable food-source trees
2. Promote the Outer Green Belt as an outdoor classroom by enabling opportunities for field-based environmental learning, such as school activities
3. Encourage and support research and information sharing into the Outer Green Belt's open space values, usage and management through partnerships with research organisations and interested community groups, including but not limited to studies of:
 - a) Environmental, recreational, and social issues associated with open space, recreation, and natural environments
 - b) Landscape and city character
 - c) Implications of urban growth on the roles of the Outer Green Belt in Wellington
 - d) Pest management (plant and animal)
 - e) Biodiversity and urban ecology.
4. Integrate research projects and findings with the need to monitor management outcomes and trends on the Outer Green Belt
5. Encourage and support citizen science projects.

Explanation

The spread of weeds into the Outer Green Belt from neighbouring properties through garden escapes or weed dumping is a serious issue, which the Council seeks to address through education about the impacts and advocating suitable garden plants to use instead of problem plants.

There is much to learn about the Outer Green Belt environment, its role in the city, the people that use it, our land management practices and the effects of the numerous activities that take place within it. Research findings underpin a lot of the Council's broad strategies and plans, such as *Our Capital Spaces* and *Our Natural Capital*, but continuing research, coupled with the Council's monitoring programmes, is needed to help guide policy development and improve work programmes.

In accordance with *Our Natural Capital* biodiversity strategy, the Council has been collaborating with universities, including Victoria University of Wellington, and other research organisations on research aimed at better understanding Wellington's ecosystems, how they are affected by close proximity to urban areas and how best to restore and manage them. Some of the research feeds into the national initiative, the People, Cities and Nature project. Research, such as lizard or botanical surveys, is still needed to verify whether some species known to have been in the Wellington area are present and, if so, their location and numbers, and to find out what factors might be limiting certain species from establishing or spreading.

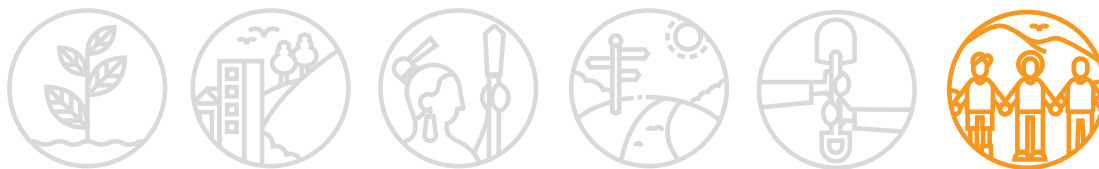
Otari-Wilton's Bush and Zealandia have been focal points of research activities within the Outer Green Belt that are linked to visitor facilities and public education programmes. The inter-related research and education strands in these facilities are already benefitting the ecological management of the Outer Green Belt through research findings and increased

engagement with and support for restoration programmes. Partnerships under the enviro-schools and Sanctuary to Sea initiatives are examples. Citizen science initiatives such as the Bioblitz at Otari to the Great Kereru Count project are increasingly becoming a part of how we are learning about our natural spaces. With bird sightings and other findings regularly reported into public databases, such as Ebird and Naturewatch, our knowledge of the Outer Green Belt is constantly expanding.

The interactions of people, including recreational users, neighbouring land owners and restoration groups, with each other and with the Outer Green Belt environment, are also potential areas for social research that might guide future management and partnership relationships. For instance, it would be useful to understand any behaviour change and changing attitudes over time to the Skyline Track being managed as a Signature Trail. Another area requiring better understanding is the impacts of pets, such as cats and dogs, on the restoration of indigenous wildlife across the city, including the Outer Green Belt, and how to manage those impacts through owner education.

Environmental education

The proximity of the Outer Green Belt to the urban area and, in particular, schools and pre-schools presents learning opportunities that could be developed in partnership with teachers. Simple 'learning outposts' could be facilitated at places suitable for students to explore and learn, linked to school lesson plans. Local schools could potentially adopt 'their' part of the Outer Green Belt as part of strengthening neighbourhood identity and connections to nature.



4.7 Resilience

4.7.1 Objectives

1. To contribute to the city's resilience and climate change response through ecosystem services on the Outer Green Belt, where appropriate and within the scope of the Outer Green Belt vision.
2. To contribute to the city's resilience through community building and emergency preparedness on the Outer Green Belt.

4.7.2 Policies

4.7.2.1 Ecosystem Services

1. Manage the Outer Green Belt's natural areas so that ecosystem services help sustain a healthy and robust environment through such things as clean air and water, flood control, soil conservation and carbon storage in native vegetation
2. Manage the Outer Green Belt to mitigate potential effects of climate change
3. Where compatible with landscape, ecological and recreational values, investigate the potential for further areas of carbon storage forests in the Outer Green Belt.

Explanation

City resilience has to do with 'future-proofing' urban environments to be as self-sustaining as possible in the face of large-scale changes, such as climate change. This includes weaving natural environments through cities, to provide important 'life support' ecosystem services and allow plant and animal populations to adapt to habitat change (see 4.2, Nature.) The Outer Green Belt already contributes to Wellington's resilience because it is such a large, central and continuous band of green space in the city's open space network. Importantly, it contains the headwaters of numerous stream catchments where good land management and forest cover enhances water quality.

Damage to the Outer Green Belt environment is likely from more extreme weather events associated with climate change and could include flooding, slips, wind damage and drought. Resilience through increased and healthy vegetation cover is the best defence as it is likely to reduce the risk of soil erosion and slips, help absorb run-off during heavy rain, retain soil moisture in dry periods and filter pollutants and sediment. Downstream benefits include improved water quality and reduced flooding. Another potential effect of climate change is increased fire risk from more droughts and, potentially, lightning strikes (see 4.7.2.2 below).

Designated areas within the Outer Green Belt have been registered as carbon storage forests under several programmes to generate carbon credits (see map under 3.7, Resilience). There could be future opportunities to help implement *Te Atakura First to Zero*, Wellington's blueprint for a Zero Carbon Capital (2019) through more carbon storage on the Outer Green Belt. The potential and implications of Emissions Trading schemes is a rapidly changing area at the present time. Carbon farming and trading schemes will need to be monitored and carefully considered to obtain any potential value while continuing to protect and enhance the Outer Green Belt values.

4.7.2.2 Fire

1. Manage fire risk by
 - a) Rules in the Rules section
 - b) Co-ordinating fire management with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ)
 - c) Implementing a fire management plan (see action a) below
 - d) Informing the public about fire risks and how to avoid causing fires via on-site signs and other visitor information
 - e) Planting fire-resistant species in areas of high fire risk
 - f) Working with neighbours to co-ordinate cross-boundary fire mitigation planning.

indigenous vegetation supplanting flammable gorse, but there will always be a risk from people causing inadvertent or deliberate fire and from lightning strike. Climate change may exacerbate the risk through likely increase in frequency and/or severity of drought conditions.

FENZ is responsible for responding to and managing fire events under its Wellington Fire Plan. In the event of a fire, Council rangers would work with FENZ to provide local knowledge. A more detailed fire plan is needed, specifically tailored to the Outer Green Belt. It needs to cover both emergency response and mitigation of fire risk. Emergency response would include such things as information provided in advance to FENZ (e.g. maps), identified safe routes and places for retreat, and potential sources of water for firefighting. Mitigation would include identifying areas of high fire risk and how to manage those particular areas, planning fire breaks, including fire breaks of fire-resistant species, boundary management in liaison with neighbours, and public education.

Explanation

Open fires on the Outer Green Belt are prohibited (unless permitted under the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw) as are fireworks. Fire has the potential to threaten safety and property and set back ecosystem restoration. The frequency of fires has decreased in recent years, largely because of regenerating

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

a) Prepare an Outer Green Belt fire management plan in co-ordination with FENZ to help guide the FENZ response in the event of a fire and to mitigate the risk of fire.	N	1-2 yrs
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4.7.2.3 Resilient communities and emergency response

1. Help build communities by encouraging citizens to enjoy and care for the Outer Green Belt together
2. Support the health and wellbeing of Wellingtonians by providing places where people can relax, be active in the outdoors and have contact with the natural environment
3. Where appropriate and compatible with other open space values, provide places for delivery of emergency services, such as water supply, and for people to meet and seek refuge in emergencies
4. Recognise key tracks on the Outer Green Belt may be suitable for providing alternative access if road and rail transport is disrupted in an emergency (see 4.5.2.2(4)).

Explanation

Communities in resilient cities are actively engaged in caring for the health of their natural environments. Those bordering the Outer Green Belt often have strong connections to ‘their’ local open space. By becoming involved in using, defending or caring for those places, people get to know each other and strengthen a sense of community. That leads to better preparedness in times of emergency - knowing their own area, resources, people with useful skills and where to go for support. Furthermore, people with good levels of health and wellbeing are likely to be better able to cope with emergencies and the change and uncertainty that often follows natural disasters.

Research indicates that people’s physical and mental health benefits from physical activity and contact with nature. The opportunities for outdoor leisure, active recreation and participation in the open spaces of the Outer Green Belt can contribute to achieving Outcome 1, ‘Getting everyone active and healthy’ in *Our Capital Spaces 20123-2023* and help address some of the issues facing communities today, such as obesity and declining physical fitness, social isolation and demands on mental health services.



Active Families Programme

As part of its ‘Green Prescription Active Families’ programme, Sport Wellington supported families in Johnsonville to “conquer Mt Kaukau”. The free programme is designed to help families have healthy lifestyles through being more active and healthy eating.

Photograph: Sport Wellington

Growing food locally is another aspect of building resilience and there have been initiatives in the city to establish community gardens and plant fruit-bearing trees. There are currently no community gardens on the Outer Green Belt and further work is required to consider if there are any areas that may be suitable in the context of the Outer Green Belt vision and values (See Rules, 6.6.7).

4.8 Monitoring

4.8.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is needed to gather data that will help inform decision-making. The amount of information available specifically about the Outer Green Belt is somewhat sparse and inconsistent because, to date, regular monitoring to specifically find out about the trends and changes over the whole area has not been done. Some information about specific places or areas in the Outer Green Belt is available, and some broader information, such as restoration planting areas, has also been recorded. The 2017/2018 Outer Green Belt citizen survey, which was done in the course of this management plan review, very usefully shed light on a wide range of aspects, including people's perceptions and awareness of the Outer Green Belt, their usage

patterns, preferences, issues and ideas. It provides a potential baseline for further surveys. The photo montages in Appendix III of this plan are also a useful record of large-scale and long-term landscape change in the Outer Green Belt.

It is now timely to set up and implement a monitoring programme to record changes in the physical Outer Green Belt environment, how it is being used and by whom, and help measure the implementation of policies in this plan. The rise in community-sourced data could be a valuable information source, yet to be systematically utilised, for example Strava, the social fitness network that people use to record routes and other site-based, experiential information online.

4.8.1.1 Monitoring plan

Action

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

- | Action | Priority | Timeline |
|---|----------|----------|
| <p>a) Set up a plan, in conjunction with other agencies and community where relevant, to monitor and evaluate trends and changes in the Outer Green Belt over the next 10 years to inform future management, to cover such things as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-yearly citizen surveys to build on the 2017/2018 survey, and gauge trends in user patterns and preferences, and general awareness of the Outer Green Belt and what it has to offer • Six-yearly aerial photography, which the Council already gets, for comparisons of large-scale changes in vegetation cover over time • Forest birds on the Outer Green Belt as part of the city-wide bird monitoring • Other native wildlife species, such as lizards, though targeted monitoring methods may need to be developed first • Freshwater monitoring, within a freshwater ecosystem health framework, potentially incorporating water quantity, quality, aquatic life, habitat and ecosystem processes³² • Pest animals on the Outer Green Belt as part of the city-wide monitoring • Rare and/or threatened plant species and plant communities on the Outer Green Belt • Records of community group activities and volunteer effort on the Outer Green Belt to quantify the value of this activity and quantify resources required to support and manage • Track counter statistics to gather track usage data • Incident/complaint reports including reported injuries • Visitor surveys, to find out who is visiting the Outer Green Belt, where, and to gauge visitor satisfaction, including experiences of key destinations and the main trails • Another set of photo-montage images of the Outer Green Belt from the same photo points as have been used in 2004 and 2018, in 10 years' time, before the next review of this plan. | N | 1-2 yrs |

³² In partnership with other agencies such as Wellington Water Limited and Greater Wellington Regional Council.